UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A PUBLIC TEXT ON CURRICULUM: REPRESENTATION IN THE EDMONTON JOURNAL, 1984 - 1994

by
Rosemarie Pelz ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Elementary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2003

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **A Public Text on Curriculum: Representation in the Edmonton Journal, 1984 - 1994** submitted by **Rosemarie Pelz** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

I respectfully dedicate this thesis:

- To my parents, Mary Rose and Alexander Markoff
- To my grandparents, Milka and Sveten Markoff and
  Violet and Wilfred Jones.

on whose shoulders I stand.

Abstract

A PUBLIC TEXT ON CURRICULUM: REPRESENTATION IN THE EDMONTON JOURNAL, 1984-1994

This study examines how curriculum is represented through a newspaper text and how that representation contributes to a public discourse on curriculum. The relationship between newspapers and curriculum issues constitutes an important part of Canadian schooling history. In this study, I explore the breadth and depth of curriculum representation by a provincial newspaper (Edmonton Journal) during a decade that has been characterized as one of economic recession and educational reform. Adopting an approach, influenced by philosophical hermeneutics and critical theory, I investigate the ways in which three selected strands (Special Needs Education, Private Education and Native Education) of curriculum are represented in the newspaper text. This interpretive document analysis raises the question of whose interests are being served by this representation of curriculum. The resulting interpretation addresses the role of the newspaper in the production of a political text.

Newspaper clippings about curriculum from the Edmonton Journal stored in the archival collection of the Edmonton Public Schools were copied for the months of each school year. The clippings were organized according to curriculum issues addressed in the selected strands of Special Needs Education, Private Education and Native Education. Close readings of the texts suggested a starting point for the interpretive process. The articles were examined through curriculum indicators of delivery, content and quality.

Analysis revealed that discursive practices in newspaper representation (such as length and frequency of articles, representation of voices, stance and controversy) contribute to the shaping of a text about curriculum. Patterns of disparate representation in the newspaper suggest that certain practices have the potential to confine and thus shape a text in ways that favour certain groups. The study revealed a layered representation of curriculum in the text of a newspaper, with implications for the public discourse on schooling.

Acknowledgments

The dissertation experience is a collaborative process. I would like to express my thanks to the following individuals for their contributions:

- Dr. Patrica Rowell who challenged and guided me throughout the duration of this journey. Thank you for your patience, for your words of wisdom, for your high expectations and for your compassion. Thank you for allowing me the room to grow as a scholar and freedom to make the exploration on my own terms.
- Members of the examining committee, Dr. Olenka Bilash, Dr. Ruth Hayden, Dr. Henry Hodysh, Dr. Kenneth Jacknicke, Dr. Robert Jackson for their insightful comments prior to and following the defense.
- Dr. Rod McLeod who served on my candidacy committee and whose passion for Alberta history inspired me to venture down unexplored paths.
- The financial support from the Alberta Teachers' Association who awarded me the B.T. Keeler Fellowship in Education (1999), and the University of Alberta for awards and scholarships along the way.
- The staff at the Edmonton Public School Archives who kindly allowed me to use their photocopier for six months and who provided me with space in the main office in which to work. Thank you especially to Laurie, Catherine and Vicky whose kindness and warmth made each day at the archives a delight.

Finally I wish to acknowledge the following individuals to whom I am deeply grateful:

- Wayne Pelz, my husband, who demonstrated significant courage in taking this journey with me and whose quiet and loving support continues to sustain me.
- Alexandria Favret, my daughter, who provided many emergency care packages, maintained a relentlessly positive attitude and preserved a belief from long ago that her mother could accomplish anything.

- Dennis Favret, my son-in-law, for the hours spent patiently teaching me about the computer, editing various drafts and doing so with a generosity of spirit that I shall always cherish.
- Karen Fortin, Kathy Markoff, Michael Markoff, my sisters and brother. I thank you for your friendship, for your love and for the inspiration you unknowingly provided as you negotiated the challenges of your own journeys.
- Ann Nichols, Liz Appleby, Thelma Voegtlin, Lois Barranoik, Kathy Goudreau, and Marg Ebbers, the friends with whom I am blessed. You graciously stayed the course and in the process listened for hours, walked for miles, read the pages, discussed the work and shared your ideas.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

> The Canadian cannot get on without his newspaper any more than the American could without his tobacco (Moodie in Rutherford, 1978, p. 5).

Susanah Moodie's oft quoted comment still resonates 150 years after it was written. Despite the sophistication and popularity of other news media, newspapers, although long past their golden age of the mid 20th century, are still considered a formidable presence in Canadian society (Rutherford, 1978; Siegel, 1996). I believe that the daily newspaper, as an agency that influences the cultural landscape of a society, is uniquely positioned to represent various aspects of the events that constitute the everyday life of that society. Such events may be found among the social actions and interactions that are framed by our political, economic and educational institutions.

With respect to the latter for example, it is a common practice for daily newspapers to publish articles (several times a week) addressing matters related to schooling. Consequently, over a period of time an interpretive text about schooling is constructed. For many of us, information about various dimensions of schooling, such as curriculum, is filtered through the text of the newspaper. Even though the space allotted to education coverage is limited when compared to space reserved for other topics, such as politics or sports, it has been suggested that, of all the media, the newspaper is the medium through which schooling issues receive the most coverage (De Riemer, 1986; Hamil, 1998; Maeroff, 1998). It is understandable then that individuals and organizations connected to educational institutions will be particularly attentive to the way newspapers represent various aspects of schooling.

Schools, as one of the primary social institutions in our culture, have long been recognized as a principal source of cultural socialization (Tomkins, 1986; Bruner, 1996; Apple, 1996a). One way cultural ideas are given voice is through the curriculum and it is curriculum issues that generate more controversy, hence more press than other dimensions of schooling (Tulk, 1984; De Riemer, 1986). Friesen (1987) comments that in western Canada "schools have always been the crucial battleground for cultural ideas…" (p. 269). It is the text about curriculum in a contemporary newspaper and the possible links to political, economic, religious or social concerns that guides the inquiry in my research.

In Canada, the relationship between education and the press was established early in the 19th century (Rutherford, 1978). Educational historians have acknowledged the critical role of the press in the promotion of public education at a time when access to formal schooling was the experience of a privileged few, and when dissatisfaction often referred to the absence, rather than the quality, of schooling (Gidney, 1972; Prentice, 1977; Tompkins, 1986). Schooling issues, particularly those that have a curriculum focus, have been consistent themes in Canadian newspapers throughout nearly two centuries of publishing. Gidney's (1972) comments regarding the 'education mania' in the early 1800's illustrate the significance of the press in the formative years of public education. During this time "Upper Canadian newspapers reprinted increasingly large amounts of material from British and American newspapers on the progress of popular education" (p. 49). The fact that "foreign educational ideas were discussed in editorials, letters to the editor and assembly debates" (ibid., p. 49) historically situates the importance of curriculum issues in the newspaper. Nearly 100 years later, in the last days of August 1922, the Edmonton Journal (a Canadian provincial newspaper) devoted several full page articles to the Department of Education's major thrust that year which was "grade eight for every child" (Edmonton Journal, 08/22). During nine months of 1922, the Edmonton Journal published a number of detailed articles, Editorials and Letters to the Editor specifically addressing the new curriculum. In the fall of 2001, nearly 80 years later, the Edmonton Journal was still very much focused on curriculum concerns as the province considered the implications for student learning in view of the politics of teacher negotiations.

In the early years of the 19th century, the debate about schooling was essentially a debate about political and religious as well as economic and social issues (Gidney, 1972). Although many of those fundamental concerns have been adjusted to mirror changing circumstances and expectations, the connection among them remains evident and their presence in contemporary newspapers continues.

In this research, I am concerned with the representation of issues related to schooling, specifically those that are concerned with curriculum. I believe we need to be mindful of the text about curriculum in the newspaper and to investigate the many possibilities for understanding curriculum that are layered within that text. If we acknowledge the significance of schooling in our society then we should also be attentive to the many ways that schooling is represented and how that representation shapes our understanding of what is significant.

This study explores the breadth and depth of curriculum representation by a provincial newspaper (Edmonton Journal) in three selected aspects of schooling, Special Needs, Private Education and Native Education, during the latter part of the 20th century (1984-1994). My study is an investigation into the ways in which curriculum and the interests of particular groups are represented in these strands of the newspaper text.

I selected the decade 1984-1994 for this study because of its proximity to the publication of a series of national reports in the United States linking curriculum to an ailing American economy. The most widely quoted of these was A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (National Commission on Education, 1983), a report commissioned for the purposes of identifying problems in American education. This report revealed serious declines in American educational performance both nationally and internationally. Another report which gained widespread attention was Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century (1989), published by The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. The cumulative effect of these national reports and the media coverage which accompanied their release pointed to a perceived crisis in education in the United States, and subsequently, in Canada. Consequently the decade was situated during a period which produced a rhetoric of reform and restructure that characterized much of the public discourse in education during the past 20 years (Dehart, 1992; Purpel & Shapiro, 1995; Harrison & Kachur, 1999).

In Alberta, a provincial publication resulting from a government-commissioned review of education (discussed in more detail on p.10, p.13 & p.17) was influential in shaping policy on schooling during the decade chosen for this study. This thesis addresses curriculum representation in three dimensions of schooling identified in that report, and examines them through the lens of selected curriculum indicators.

A secondary reason for selecting this particular decade for the study is a personal one. During these years I was a practicing teacher in the province of Alberta and I became very interested in how schooling issues were represented in the media. My interest in the current research study was motivated in part by the mismatch between my own experiences in the schools and my interpretation of the way in which certain schooling issues were represented in the newspaper. Throughout the 1990's the words *crisis* and *education* were increasingly linked in newspaper articles about schooling. That education was characterized through a representation of crisis made me wonder about a crisis of representation. Personal awareness of a mismatch between experience and public text about schooling alerted me to the need to be more attentive to the representations about various aspects of schooling in the print media. It was also at this time that I noticed certain patterns that were present in the way parents and others in the neighbourhood discussed schooling in our community. Often conversations would be sprinkled with words and phrases that had previously appeared in the newspaper text about schooling. The authority and the authenticity of newspaper commentary on schooling was rarely challenged.

The discursive practices through which my family history, personal experiences and professional life are constituted have shaped the way I understand the world. As the granddaughter of non English-speaking immigrants and the daughter of working class parents I learned to value practices that support social and cultural equity and to question political practices that undermine principles of social justice. Work and travel experiences in countries such as Laos, Israel, Morocco and Papua New Guinea have contributed to a cross-cultural understanding of the ways in which the unequal distribution of power shapes the text of daily lives.

On occasion I have been living in countries undergoing serious social and political upheaval. The representation of these crises in Canadian newspapers when compared to local representations fueled an interest in and a concern about the shaping of public discourse through mass media such as the newspaper.

THE ROLE OF NEWSPAPERS IN SOCIETY

It is likely that the practice of using the newspapers as an entry point to Canadian culture has continued with each successive wave of new immigrants. It is not difficult to believe that before the advent of other media and ESL classes, the newspaper was for many immigrants *the* English teacher. During the 1930's, for example, when my father was a child, one of his daily responsibilities was to read the newspaper to his father, a non-English speaker. The rudimentary translation provided by a child to his father poignantly illustrates how newspapers connected individuals to the larger issues of Canadian society and familiarized them with the cultural norms of its social institutions.

In earlier times, as well as in the present, newspapers played a seminal role in the political culture of our country. According to Rutherford (1978), emergent forms of the newspaper were highly partisan and without exception served as the official organ of the reigning political parties (Rutherford, 1978; Siegel, 1996). It has been suggested that the partisan element of earlier times has re-emerged in recent years in the wake of corporate monopolies of large numbers of provincial newspapers and that the notion of a free press is more a function of the mythology built around the print media rather than that which is based in fact (Barlow & Winter, 1997; Chomsky, 1999). Contrasting views, such as the one offered by Altheide (1996), support the opinion that newspapers, albeit to varying degrees, offer a variety of opinions and positions which in turn reflect the diverse socio/political makeup of a community.

I believe that newspapers have also addressed civic responsibilities by raising public awareness of situations that challenge our beliefs about the nature of social justice. By giving a voice to those who often exist in the marginal regions of society, the possibility exists for a newspaper, in the role of our collective social conscience, to become the impetus for galvanizing both political and social groups to initiate actions for much needed social change. I think text that initiates public discussion frequently becomes a starting point for further investigation and through the process of public discussion the seeds of social change may be planted. Others, however, have suggested that sometimes social problems are masked or displaced "by being understood as personal or psychological problems or within a moral framework of good and evil rather than in social terms" (O' Shaughnessy, 1999, p. 161). This masking or displacement is interpreted as one way the various forms of media construct values and beliefs that are normal or natural. Both the selection of social problems or the omission and redefinition of social problems can be seen to be engaging in what O'Shaughnessy refers to as ideological work.

We can easily see that persuasive writing in newspapers is most visible in opinion pieces such as Editorials and Letters to the Editor; however, persuasive writing can also be found in other genres and in other ways that are not immediately apparent. Newspapers can structure texts through length and frequency of articles and they can shape that text through the voices that are selected to represent various perspectives. Through opinion pieces as well as through the strategic organization of other articles, a newspaper may appear to assume a particular position and, in so doing, construct a version of social reality that is supportive of that position. Like all written texts, a newspaper offers a filtered view of the events of everyday life; it also serves an interpretive function, communicating information to and about the larger society. Not only do newspapers document and interpret, they are themselves documents that can be studied; they are both the interpreters and the interpreted.

NEWSPAPERS AS HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

Newspapers "are a major source of evidence for social research and, like all documents, can be assessed through the quality control criteria of authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning" (Scott, 1990, p. 143). I am referring to a number of well-documented studies in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand conducted between 1960 and 1980 that attest to the popularity of newspapers in social research (Bell, 1991).

Newspapers, in much the same way as diaries, records, and government publications, can also be situated among the many historical documents that are used to further our understanding about a particular time period. Dennison's (1988) study, which examines the perceptions and attitudes toward children in the early part of the last century, illustrates how newspapers, in their capacity as primary source documents, can be used effectively as historical data.

Recently one of Alberta's provincial newspapers, the Edmonton Journal, celebrated nearly a century of publication. I was very interested in this celebratory issue (Edmonton Journal, 09/29/99) because it underscored the importance of the newspaper's position in the community and pointed to its significance as historical record (*Moments in History,* Section F, p. 16; *The World Comes to Edmonton*, Section F, p. 11). The interpretation of events and the meaningfulness of those events within the broader context of social, political and economic community life was evident in this issue. I think the headlines in that particular issue easily communicated the newspaper's contribution in reporting and describing events that helped to shape the growth of a province (*Taking on Bible Bill and Winning*, Section F, p. 9; *Journal Grows with Alberta 1903-1953*, Section F, p. 4). In the process of interpreting the events, the newspaper also helped to shape those events.

As Scott (1990) and others have pointed out, there are a number of difficulties associated with using newspapers as primary source documents. The newspaper, as an historical document, is easily accessible although not always accurate. As Krathwohl (1998) notes, "A document may be genuine in that it was produced at the time and by the person presumed to have produced it but still be an inaccurate account of what is said to be of interest" (p. 578). Collective authorship, which I address in Chapter II, is another concern. A further concern lies in the difficulty of imputing intent; what is obvious to the researcher who has spent months in analysis will not necessarily be evident to the reader who has choice about what he or she reads. Interpretive understanding of a text depends on the knowledge of the audience and, as Tuchman (1978) has implied, the frequency and intensity of the message.

It is not my intention in this research to determine the accuracy or inaccuracy of the information represented in the Edmonton Journal, nor is it my goal to adjudicate intent. My inquiry explores how certain aspects of curriculum are represented during a decade of change. The historical documents used in this study are those found in the newspaper archival collection of one school district in Alberta. The interpretive framework offered in my dissertation suggests one possibility for examining those representations.

Edmonton Journal

The Edmonton Journal is a nationally recognized, daily newspaper in western Canada. It competes with the Calgary Herald for the largest readership in the province of Alberta. Since its inception (in 1903), the Edmonton Journal (hereinafter referenced as the Journal) has been an integral part of provincial history, growing and developing alongside another of the province's social institutions: its schools. Initially, the Journal was published as the Evening Standard. In 1912 it was bought by the conservative, Ontario based, Southam family (Bruce, 1968; Journal, 09/29/99) and remained under its control until the mid-1990's, when corporate ownership was transferred to the Hollinger Group under the directorship of newspaper magnate Conrad Black (Barlow & Winter, 1997). In recent years, the newspaper has come under new ownership.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT FOR SCHOOLING IN ALBERTA: 1984-1994

In Alberta, as in the rest of Canada, schooling is legislated as a provincial jurisdiction. The province assumes control for all aspects of schooling with the sole exception of schooling for Native students, which is a federal responsibility. The primary legislation which governs schooling in the province of Alberta is the School Act. Under the School Act, the government mandates specific programs of study for elementary and secondary schools (including Special Education programs) and governs the activities of teachers, principals, school councils and school board trustees. The School Act is also responsible for the governance of private schools, charter schools, enrollment in francophone schools and the schooling of foreign students. The collection (taxation) and distribution of funds and all matters concerning labour relations come under the jurisdiction of the School Act.

The political landscape in Alberta has been coloured by the policies of Conservative government which initially gained power in 1971 under Peter Lougheed. During the 10 years of this study (1984-1994), five Ministers (four men) were appointed to the Education portfolio. The number of Ministers raises questions about the degree of consequence accorded education in the province of Alberta especially in light of the short tenure enjoyed by some of the Ministers. It is noteworthy, I think, that only one woman has held the Education portfolio in 97 years.

Certainly, the number of Ministers suggests that in some cases familiarity with the portfolio would have been problematic. In addition to issues which were a carryover from other administrations, each Minister faced challenges specific to his/her tenure. Nancy Betkowski, for example, was faced with the task of re-designing the principles for a new School Act after the initial Bill, introduced in the legislature in 1987, was the subject of much debate. Some of these challenges faced by the Education Ministers reflected fluctuating economic conditions while others mirrored changing expectations for schooling from an increasingly knowledgeable Alberta public.

During the decade of study a number of legislative actions permanently altered the way that schooling was governed in the province of Alberta. Changes in legislation affecting schooling in the province of Alberta included revisions to the Teaching Profession Act (1984), the establishment of a Council of Teaching Standards (1985) and a new School Act (1988). Each of these legislative changes, such as the establishment of the Council of Teaching Standards which ensured the formal evaluation of teachers, signaled a movement towards greater public accountability.

In January of 1985, the Alberta government released *Proposals for Amending the School Act and Related Legislation* (Alberta Education, 1985b). In the Journal, the document was referred to as *Partners in Education* or *Proposed Principles for a New School Act* (Journal, 01/17/85). In the spring of 1987, the controversial new School Act (Bill 59) was introduced into the legislature. Much of the controversy surrounding the

Bill was focused on Section 2.9 which addressed the rights of exceptional children. Essentially, the clause stated that Boards were not responsible for providing education to those students who were deemed not to be "able to benefit from schooling because of their "severe lack in intellectual functioning or severe medical fragility" (Journal, 4/11/87). Prior to changes resulting in the School Act of 1988 (the focus of much of the data found in Chapter IV), there had been no revisions to the School Act since 1970.

Five years later (1993), in the wake of a new administration, Bill 8 (the proposed new School Amendments Act) was introduced, suggesting the amalgamation of School Boards, increased responsibility for private schools and the right of Francophones to govern their own schools (Journal, 09/16/93). Changes to the School Act (Bill 19), allowing for the establishment of charter schools, were introduced in 1994 (Journal, 04/12/94). Some writers have suggested that the challenges facing the Department of Education after the 1993 election reflected a political agenda that was intent on altering the educational landscape to facilitate new economic priorities rather than facilitate what was best for Alberta students (Taft, 1997; Harrison & Kachur, 1999; Mackay & Flower, 1999). At the very least, a casual review of these milestones might indicate a shift in philosophical orientation was occurring.

In addition to formal legislation (during the decade of this study), the government released a number of Discussion Papers. Both Discussion Papers and legislation contributed to a discourse regarding the content, quality, delivery and assessment of schooling in Alberta. Premier Lougheed's vision of the 'New Basics' in education has its roots in the *White Paper Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985-1990* (Alberta, 1985a). Among other things the Proposal advocated economic literacy among high school students (Journal, 09/20/84; 09/24/84; 09/26/84).

Four Discussion Papers (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984a; 1984b; 1984c; 1984d) recommending changes to Public, Private, Native and Intercultural Education were released in the spring and fall of 1984. Although the Discussion Papers (ibid) and subsequently the Final Report (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e) celebrated many of the positive aspects of the education system in Alberta, they also identified a number of areas that were cause for serious concern. Despite the fact that many of the recommendations in the reports were not acted upon, these papers provided a context for dialogue about schooling in Alberta. At the time, each discussion paper received some commentary in the Journal thus establishing a public forum for a continuing dialogue about schooling.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT FOR SCHOOLING IN ALBERTA: 1984-1994

> Education is one of Alberta's greatest resources. But unlike oil and gas, it is not a commodity. It cannot be valued in dollars and cents; its production cannot be turned on and off, depending on economic conditions (Journal, 21/01/87).

Friesen (1987) comments that "Alberta was Canada's Cinderella in the post-1940's decade" (p. 427). After the discovery of oil at Leduc in 1947, Alberta rapidly developed its industrial economy. "If Saskatchewan was Canada's guide to democracy, then Alberta was its guide to state support of private entrepreneurs" (ibid., p. 439). Prior to the discovery of oil, Alberta had largely been an agriculture-based community with most of the revenues coming from ranching and grain farming. The new economy brought increased revenues which allowed the government to allocate more money to both public and private interests. Consequently, the economic context of schooling in Alberta has always been closely tied to resources from the oil industry and, as such, is subject to the ebb and flow of oil prices.

MacKay and Flower (1999) citing Decore and Pannu in 1993, suggest that education funding in Alberta began to decline following the boom of 1980/81. Using statistics on per pupil funding from the Canadian Teachers' Federation, they point to the fact that other provinces were increasing their spending on education between 1985/86 and 1990/91 (p. 34) while Alberta was steadily decreasing its support for schools. Taft (1997) suggests that the collapse in oil prices at the onset of the Getty administration (1985/86) resulted in severe cuts to public sector services such as health and education while financial assistance increased to the private sector.

At the beginning of the 10 year period in this study (1984/85), education funding was frozen at 1983 levels. There had already been cuts to library and counseling services and, according to reports in the Journal, provincial funding had been reduced from 82% of the overall funding to 62%. Block funding, which was introduced in 1984, allocated funds on a per resident pupil basis rather than on pupils actually served in a school district. This new funding structure had the potential to impact programs for Special Needs students.

During the 10 year period only minor increases in funding occurred in the 1985/86, 1988/89 and in the 1989/90 budgets. Each of these increases occurred during the Getty administration, the largest of which were in election years. All other years experienced cutbacks, the most severe in 1993/94 under the Klein administration when the goal was to reduce funding by 20%. Funding cutbacks seriously altered the educational environment in Alberta and the competition for dollars among various groups escalated in the remaining years of the decade. By 1993/94, education funding in Alberta had been reduced by 269 million dollars. Teaching staff had been reduced by 778 (Taft, 1997, p. 28) and teachers along with other public sector workers had taken a 5.5% rollback in wages. From a funding perspective, the province was truly in the middle of an educational crisis. The details of the funding crisis have been well documented by other researchers (Harrison & Laxer, 1995; Taft, 1997; Harrison & Kachur, 1999; Mackay & Flower, 1999). Although funding is not a primary focus, it does contribute to the economic context of the decade of schooling in this study.

THIS STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In his writing on qualitative methods in research on teaching, Erickson (1986) refers to the "invisibility of everyday life" (p. 121). He writes about the things that we are so much in the habit of doing and believing that we are not in the habit of looking beyond the surface level of their significance. In this study, I ask questions about a public text taken from everyday life and I examine the various ways that this text is used to represent a text about curriculum.

When the government of Alberta commissioned an investigation into the state of provincial schools in 1983 it was in direct response to public outrage concerning the nature of the social studies curriculum in one Alberta classroom. The group of 14 professionals commissioned to conduct this study became known as the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding. The Committee prepared four Discussion Papers and a Final Report, (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984a; 1984b; 1984c; 1984d; 1984e). Among the aspects of education discussed by the Committee, three strands were prominent in the coverage by the Journal following the publication of the Discussion Papers and the Final Report. Those strands were Native Education, Private Education and Special Needs Education.

In this study, I follow the coverage of Private Education, Native Education and Special Needs Education, (a component of the Final Report on Public Education) in the Journal, through the decade which followed the release of the Committee's publication (1984-1994). My inquiry is guided by the following broad question:

What is the scope/focus of curriculum representation in the Journal in the decade 1984-1994?

And, more specifically, by the following questions:

1. **What aspects of the curriculum are addressed in three selected strands ?**

   (Native Education, Private Education, Special Needs Education)

2. **How are curriculum aspects in the three strands addressed?**
3. **Whose interests are served by this representation of curriculum?**

Question 1 is answered in Chapter IV, through a descriptive analysis of the breadth and depth of curriculum coverage in the Journal. Question 2 is the focus of an interpretive analysis of the data, in Chapter V. Question 3 is also addressed in Chapter V and is a critique of responses to the first two questions.

SIGNIFICANCE

Newspapers are situated among the historical documents that are used to further our understanding about a particular time period. Although several studies point to the significance of newspapers as primary sources of data in education (Worth, 1952; Dennison, 1988; Fisher, 1988; Dehart, 1992), newspapers as primary sources of data in educational research are not as widely used as other data sources. The analysis conducted in this study provides a unique contribution to the body of literature being compiled in Alberta about various aspects of the schooling process because it offers an interpretation of data about schooling that are produced outside the parameters of formal education.

I believe curriculum issues have the potential to impact the lives of students and educators throughout all levels of schooling. Consequently, in this study, the analysis of text about curriculum in the newspaper highlights critical issues in education during a specific time period. The analysis also provides valuable insights about discursive practices that may influence social action related to schooling. Ultimately the findings in my study raise questions regarding the selection and representation of curriculum issues offered in the newspaper. The findings also reveal that a close reading of curriculum representations stands to inform our understanding about how various realities about schooling are constructed.

Moreover, this documentation and analysis provides commentary on curriculum of relevance to teacher associations. We know that provincial teacher organizations often need to address issues relating to educators and other aspects of schooling which arise from representations in the press. My study has implications for comparative studies between provinces and for the larger Canadian educational agenda as a whole. In this respect my research serves to add to an existing body of knowledge about curriculum concerns in Alberta during the closing years of the 20th century.

Newspaper text about curriculum contributes to a public discourse on curriculum. Public discourse has the potential to include all members of the community. Hence the relevance of the study moves beyond professional boundaries to include interests in a larger community.

ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

I have organized this thesis into six chapters, each of which addresses a specific aspect of the research. In Chapter I, I briefly state the nature and purpose of the study. The purpose is twofold; firstly to explore the breadth and depth of information about curriculum in a provincial newspaper between 1984 -1994; and secondly, to track the coverage of three general strands of curriculum concerns during that period. I also outline the role of newspapers in society, their significance as historical documents and the relationship between the print media and schooling in Canada. The significance of the research to the larger community concludes my first chapter.

I provide an historical overview of each of the three selected curriculum strands in Chapter II. I then establish a theoretical framework for the study (in Chapter II), introducing the concepts which are used to analyze and interpret the data. I review the literature related to the theoretical framework in order to position my study within that literature.

In Chapter III, I locate the methodological approach used in this research within the traditions of hermeneutic document analysis and provide a rationale for that approach. I also describe the nature of the research questions and provide a detailed description of each stage of the inquiry.

Chapter IV contains the findings from an analysis of the data. I introduce this chapter with a description, organized by subject and social dimension, of the broad range of curriculum representation between 1984-1994. The description is followed by a general overview of each selected curriculum strand and is subsequently organized around the curriculum indicators of delivery, content and quality. A summary of the key points in each strand and a link to the other strands completes each section of the findings.

Chapter V provides an interpretive analysis of the findings in Chapter IV. In the final chapter, Chapter VI, I revisit the significance of the study through a discussion of the layered representation of curriculum in newspaper text. I conclude with considerations of the implications of such layering of curriculum representation in the newspaper, and make suggestions for extending the research.

CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I provide an historical overview of three strands of curriculum representation by the Journal during the decade 1984-1994. It is a summary of the key events leading up to and continuing through the decade of the study. The purpose of the historical backdrop is to situate each strand of curriculum representation by the newspaper, thus framing the data analysis and interpretation.

The historical overview is followed by development of a conceptual framework derived from the literature on curriculum perspectives and representation in a public discourse on schooling. I have organized this section of the chapter around those general ideas which shape the direction of my writing (Understanding Curriculum, Representing Curriculum Through Text, and Public Discourse on Curriculum).

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In Chapter I, I made some general comments regarding the establishment of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding and the publication of the Discussion Papers. Here, I draw attention to one task of the Committee, which was to review the Alberta curriculum and to make recommendations that would promote tolerance and understanding in all areas of curricular materials. To this end a series of public hearings was held throughout the province and several hundred submissions were received by the Committee from various individuals and organizations whose input was solicited via public announcements, personal invitations and widely distributed questionnaires. Following the hearings and the submissions, the four Discussion Papers (mentioned in Chapter I) were released in May, June, September and October 1984. At this point the public, including the media, was invited to participate in the draft recommendations. In December of 1984, following public input, a final summary report was released for public viewing. The summary report was frequently addressed in the Journal throughout the first year of this study. The strands of curriculum representation selected for this study are Special Needs Education, Private Education and Native Education.

Special Needs Education

> In Canada, education is compulsory for everyone. However, exceptions are made in three provinces with regard to physically and mentally handicapped children. In Prince Edward Island, British Columbia and to some extent in Alberta, handicapped children are not guaranteed a right to education in that they may be excluded from regular classrooms. The province may, but need not provide them with alternative schooling. The situation may change with the application of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Poirier, Gougen & Leslie, 1988, p. 43).

Alberta Education first used the term Special Education in 1962 (Hop, 1982). Winzer (1996) defines Special Needs as "an educational term used to designate pupils who require Special Education" (p. 9). Prior to the 1960's, children with Special Needs were referred to as handicapped or subnormal, the latter term being replaced with the former sometime during the 1940's (ibid., p. 50). Chalmers (1967) makes reference to less charitable labels contained in a Department of Health distribution of enrollment report for the Provincial Training School taken from 1963. Here children were categorized as "idiot, imbecile, moron or borderline" (p. 253).

Although the quality of Special Education and the range of services available for students had improved substantively since 1905, prior to the 1950's these services were at best sporadic and limited. Church (1980) suggests that the history of Special Education services for handicapped children in Alberta was characterized by gradualism and an ad hoc manner "with little or no direction provided through planning, policy statements or comprehensive legislation" (ibid., p. 23). Between 1932 and 1950 change was slow and, like many social innovations, tended to be concentrated in the large urban centres. In the first half of the century, private hospital schools in Calgary and Edmonton provided for the "profoundly" physically handicapped students (Laycock, 1963; Chalmers, 1967; Hop, 1982).

Segregated schooling for children who were deaf, hearing impaired or mentally retarded was provided in a limited capacity since the 1950's. Chalmers (1967) indicates that in fact government responsibility for the education of the profoundly deaf predated the establishment of Alberta as a province. In most cases children who were deaf or blind were educated outside the province in places like Winnipeg or Toronto or they were kept at home. This situation continued until the mid 1950's and early 1960's when facilities were finally established in Edmonton and Calgary. Children who were labeled as mentally retarded were either institutionalized or kept at home (Laycock, 1963). Schooling for the educable retarded was provided through grants from the Foundation Program Plan fund but "not until 1954 is there any mention of the existence of special schools for retarded children, that is for the trainable retarded" (Chalmers, 1967, p. 251).

The establishment of a Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children, early in 1950's, revealed an increasing awareness of the needs and challenges of children who were not participating in the public school system. In order to qualify for provincial assistance, parents, who founded schools for the trainable mentally retarded, also established a formal association in the 1950's: Alberta Association for Retarded Children (AARC).

Although the period between 1950-1970 "was one of rapid growth in population, in schools and particularly in special education programs" (Church, 1980, p. 28), multi-handicapped children who suffered from a combination of mental and physical disabilities, did not fare as well: "Where the school system did not provide an education for disabled children, parents shouldered the responsibility to educate their children and fought to keep their children in their own homes and communities rather than sending them to institutions" (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e, p. 63).

By 1960, the first school in Alberta for children who were identified as learning disabled was established in Edmonton. In general however, throughout most of the 50's 60's and 70's, if the needs of 'exceptional' children were met, particularly those with severe physical and mental handicaps, the services to meet those needs were delivered through private institutions (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding , 1984e, p. 65; Journal, 01/31/88). Many of these institutions were staffed by uncertified teachers (Laycock, 1963). For much of the previous century, it was possible to teach in certain private institutions without certification and hence it was not uncommon during this time for children with Special Needs to be taught by teachers who may have lacked basic teacher education and/or special needs training. Funding for the education of Special Needs students in private institutions was provided by the government and administered through the local school boards (Church, 1980).

Winzer (1996) postulates that "the major catalyst for change in the 1960's and 1970's included the legislative and court systems" (p. 84). Church (1980) suggests that the increase in the provision of educational services for handicapped children in the 1970's in Alberta was primarily the result of the initiatives of the Conservative government which had replaced the 35 year old Social Credit reign (p. 30). I think the evidence also suggests that a more compassionate atmosphere was beginning to evolve and that children with a wide range of disabilities, whose needs had not been previously been addressed in the school system, were beginning to be recognized. Perhaps the strongest evidence for this was the establishment of the Early Childhood Education services in the mid-1970's and a greater emphasis on programming for students with learning disabilities. Lastly, it should be acknowledged that federal legislation in the United States (such as P194-142, an education law passed by the American government) influenced actions in Alberta and other provinces as well (Poirier, Gougen, & Leslie, 1988; Winzer, 1996). However, despite these actions, anecdotal comments, reviewed in the Final Report on education in Alberta (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e), suggested that prior to 1984 the provision of Special Needs Education was largely at the discretion of individuals and individual boards.

In Canada, Special Needs education "has emerged according to the exigencies of provincial political, social and economic pressures brought about during the pre-and post-confederation era" (Csapo, 1980, p. 226). In 1988, the province of Alberta responded to social and political pressure with the passing of a new School Act. The Act essentially guaranteed the right of all children regardless of disability, to an education. A few years prior to passing of the new School Act in Alberta, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was incorporated into the federal constitution. It is possible that federal actions may have been influential in moving Alberta from a position of permissive legislation to one of mandatory legislation. Even though legislation forced provinces like Alberta to revise their policies regarding the education of exceptional children, Winzer (1996) and others (Poirier, Gougen & Leslie, 1988) suggest that high profile litigation (e.g., Carrier vs. Lamont County, 1979) also played a role in provincial rethinking of attitudes:

> Law and public policy have had a profound effect on the type and quality of education offered to exceptional children and youth. In some cases, they decide whether exceptional students are educated at all; in others they determine how such children are educated. In recent years all of the provinces have elevated the concept of equal educational opportunity for all students to the status of the dominant educational ideology (Winzer, 1996, p. 85).

Summary

In the first half of the 20th century, if educational services for children with certain disabilities were provided, it was through the services of those offered by private institutions. Institutions were generally restricted to the urban areas and space was limited. Some provincial funding for schooling has always been available to hospital facilities; however, funding for private schools providing education for students with Special Needs was not made available until after 1950. Even then Private Schools which provided services for children with Special Needs were not required to hire certified teachers. In general, children with Special Needs, particularly those who were intellectually handicapped, were often ascribed negative labels and were kept out of the mainstream. Some Special Needs such as learning disabilities did not become part of the public discourse on Special Education until after the 1960's.

Parents and other supporters of children with particular challenges formally organized to represent the voices of these students, initiating a process that would enable them to gain access to funding and subsequently more appropriate educational services. Access to social power was secured largely through the adversarial processes of litigation and legislation.

Private Education

Prior to the 1900's, private schools were the only source of formal schooling in the Territories. Hop (1982) noted that the "early private mission schools were very informal and practical. Their main purpose was to teach religion to the Indians and children of white settlers" (p. 50). It is easy to understand why public schools, which first appeared in the 1880's were receptive to borrowing certain elements of the private system. As the only model of schooling available, private schools played a pivotal role in the development of schooling in Alberta (Hop, 1982) offering a foundation for a school system that, for its time, would be considered inclusive: the public school.

A second reason for acknowledging the importance of private schools in the history of Alberta schooling is the role they performed in the education of students with Special Needs. Long before there were any programs available for mentally or physically handicapped children in the public system, private schools offered a place, albeit limited in scope and professional expertise, for these children. Until 1962, "schools for the physically handicapped in Alberta were initiated by private agencies" and operated in private schools (Hop, 1982, p. 95).

During the first quarter of the 20th century, the majority of the founding private schools in Alberta were denominational (primarily Catholic and Protestant). Many of the Protestant groups such as the Lutherans, Anglicans, and Mennonites followed the Methodist and the Presbyterian example of establishing religious- based private schools as a means of Canadianizing and in some cases Christianizing the waves of new immigrants flooding into the province (Hop, 1982; Palmer & Palmer, 1990). "The maintenance of religious traditions was so important to many Albertans that they devoted much time and money to establishing schools that reflected denominational perspectives" (Palmer & Palmer, 1990, p. 105). At the turn of the century, private schools served approximately 10% of the population in Alberta.

> ...for most adolescents, high school education was simply not physically available. The high schools were in the towns, but in 1906, 69 percent of Alberta's population was rural. There were no school buses to take children to high school and no dormitories operated by school systems to provide low cost food and lodgings. Of course, those farmers who were comparatively affluent could send their sons and daughters to any one of a dozen private, church sponsored schools, half of which were affiliated with the University of Alberta, for the purpose of writing special matriculation exams (Chalmers, 1967, p. 189).

Although private residential schools declined in popularity after the war years, due in part to a greater emphasis on the family, denominational private day schools were on the rise as a result of the increasing secularization of public schools (Hop, 1982). In fact, Ludwig (1970) points to the increasing enrollment patterns in private schools throughout Alberta between 1961-1965 with a decline taking place after 1965. Despite the decline in popularity of the established churches and the "continued vitality of evangelical and unorthodox conservative groups" (Palmer & Palmer, 1990, p. 337) in the late 1960's and 1970's, the percentage of private schools had been substantially reduced and continued to decline throughout the 1970's.

The period after the war years was characterized by change for the private schools. With the passing of the School Act of 1946, private schools were no longer completely autonomous. The new legislation was an important milestone for two reasons. First, it ensured that facilities, teachers and curriculum had to be approved by Alberta Education, and secondly, certain private schools (handicapped) were now eligible for funding: "Up until 1946 private schools of all types were funded through tuition, donation, church and private sponsorship" (Hop, 1982, p. 78). The only other province to provide funding to private schools at that time was Saskatchewan.

During the 1950's, the private schools established their own provincial association, the Association of Private Schools and Colleges in Alberta (APSCA) which was later changed to the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta (AISCA). The establishment of an association permitted the organization of private schools to apply for provincial funding, as well as to lobby politicians. Commenting on the coalition of interests, Ludwig (1970) wrote:

> Private school supporters have attempted to influence government policies in education through such varied media as the Royal Commission on Education, the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta, the Christian school Movement and finally through direct political party activity (Ludwig, 1970, p. 36).

By the 1980's and into the 1990's, during a period of declining confidence in public education, there was a notable increase in the number of students attending private schools. The Journal, citing figures from Statistics Canada and Alberta Education, noted the increase both provincially and nationally (Journal, 09/11/89; 03/11/92).

By 1984, the first year of the decade in this study, private schools in Alberta fell under one of four categories. Most were incorporated under Category I, employing certified teachers, using provincially approved curriculum and thus qualifying for up to 75% of the School Foundation Program Fund. Category II schools were schools for the handicapped; Category III were language schools and Category IV schools were established in 1978 as a result of litigation. The first of Category IV schools was described by Baergen (1982) as follows:

> The first school established under the new regulation was opened in 1977 by a group of conservative Mennonites in central Alberta who had taken their children out of the public school system because it promoted values incompatible with theirs. The courts held for the Mennonites and the ruling is being hailed as a landmark decision (Baergen, 1982, p. 26).

Interestingly, the 1986 government regulation handbook on private schools indicates only Category I schools were required to have certified teachers. A small number of Church schools which did not fit any of the categories were classified as unauthorized (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e, p. 104). It was not uncommon for the latter group of private schools to be held in church basements. Despite being in the minority, it was the latter category that generated much of the press about private schools, possibly because certain aspects of this type of schooling, such as the use of the ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) resources, had the potential to generate controversy.

Another category often overlooked in the discussion of private schools is home-schooling. Prior to 1989, students who were home-schooled were essentially in a private school situation as they were schooled privately, in the home, by their parents. Home-schooling in the late 1980's, and charter schools in the 1990's offer significantly limited access. These alternatives to the traditional process of public schooling, became increasingly recognized as viable alternatives to the public school system. Currently both home-schooling and charter schools operate under the auspices of local School Boards and funding is supplied through public sources. Because of a public perception that charter schools are essentially publicly funded private schools, newspaper articles addressing both types of schooling are included in the Private Education strand.

Responding to the proposed changes in the School Act affecting private schools, one MLA commented that the new regulations "would prove to be the most controversial aspect of the new School Act" (Journal, 03/01/85). These changes required that all private schools be approved and those that were classified as unapproved would be abolished. Since approved private schools would benefit from increased funding, various groups (such as the Association of Public School Boards who supported public education) vehemently opposed the changes. Although controversial, these changes did not match the intensity of opposition in the newspaper generated by Section 2.9 (Bill 59) which addressed Special Needs Education and threatened to impose limitations on access to a public education.

Summary

Private schools can be credited for pioneering initiatives in various dimensions of education in Alberta, particularly in the remaining years of the 19th century and first 50 years of the 20th century. As the first official model of schooling they offered a prototype for the public school system. At one time, private schools were the only source of schooling for native children and children with physical or mental handicaps. Despite the introduction of categories of private schools in the latter half of the 20th century, schools specifically for those with Special Needs, or those who were to be instructed in a language other than French or English, did not necessarily require certified teachers.

Both legislation and litigation played a significant role in the development of Private Education in Alberta. When groups of individuals effectively organized to form associations they were able to develop policies, lobby government and apply for increased funding, thus establishing a measure of social power and political influence.

Native Education

> The education of native children in day and residential schools was one of the key elements in Canada's Indian policy from its inception. The destruction of the children's link to their ancestral culture and their assimilation into the dominant society were its main objectives (Titley, 1986, p. 74).

The power to regulate all aspects of education for Native children was legislated in the British North America Act of 1867. Traditionally the responsibility for Native Education came under the auspices of the Federal Department of Indian Affairs. Up to and including the 1960's, many Native students in Alberta, as in much of the rest of Canada were schooled in religious-based residential schools. Boarding schools and industrial schools were the two types of residential schools operating in Canada in the early years of Native Education. Titley (1986) differentiated early boarding schools from industrial schools via location, age of students and curriculum objectives. Chalmers (1967) suggested that the focus in industrial schools was vocational training:

> Theoretically, the objective of the industrial school was to supplement book learning by teaching boys a trade and girls those skills they would require when they grew to womanhood and became wives and mothers. In practice, farming was the only trade which the schools seriously tried to teach (p. 265).

But the overriding socializing goal, according to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (2001), was outlined in the policy driven directives of the Indian Act, as unquestionably assimilationist.

By 1922, it was clear that the industrial model was not successful. Native students were unable to find work or acceptance within the white communities. The industrial model was converted into what was to become known as the boarding or residential schools and the curriculum changed somewhat to reflect a more academic orientation. After World War II, the objective of the schools was integration into the provincial school system (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 2001).

Regardless of the objective, children attending industrial/boarding/residential schools remained isolated from the larger population in Alberta and were taught by "instructors with no professional training and little general education" (Chalmers, 1967, p. 264). Evidence presented in the report of the Royal Commission (2001) indicates that Native students were subjected to isolation from their families as a result of a law requiring parents living on the Reserve to turn their children over to the Residential school authorities. They were removed from their home communities for long periods of time, prohibited from speaking their native language and cut off from their cultural heritage. If, as the Royal Commission (2001) suggests, "education is the transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next" (p. 1, Volume 3), it seems likely that, for the first half of the 20th century, Canadian Aboriginal people lived with a cultural deficit. The curriculum at the residential schools had little if anything to do with the way of life they had left (Journal, 06/06/88). As Titley (1986) pointed out:

> In terms of its objectives then, the policy of educating Indian children in segregated day and residential schools failed. Its failure was openly acknowledged by the joint parliamentary committee that examined the Indian Act between 1946 and 1948 when it rejected that policy and proposed instead the integration of young Indians into public schools (p. 95).

In Alberta, there was little provincial interest in Native Education until 1950 when federal practices regarding Native affairs were undergoing significant re-evaluation. "In 1951, the Indian Act was revised to permit the integration of registered Indian children into provincial school systems" (Tompkins, 1986, p. 251). Even though it was not always welcomed by white communities, the federal government actively pursued a policy of integrating children from reserves into nearby provincial schools throughout the 1960's. In Alberta, the formation of the Northlands School Division, which served the needs of a predominately Native and Metis community, was seen as "a breakthrough in not only Metis but Indian education" (Chalmers, 1967, p. 274). By the 1970's, at least 60% of Native students in Canada were attending provincial schools. Residential schools became an artifact of the past. There was resistance to the legislated change with Native communities, and "the Native Indian brotherhood began to exert pressure to slow the pace of provincialization in the interest of promoting band-operated and locally-controlled Federal schools" (Tomkins, 1986, p. 343). Prior to the early 1970's, aboriginal communities lacked an effective political voice which allowed them to competently organize concerns about schooling. In 1972, an official policy statement by the National Indian Brotherhood (later known as the Assembly of First Nations) called for Native communities to assume local control of education.

Tomkins (1986) points to a lack of trained Native teachers as a major difficulty in the education of native students:

> … it was difficult to see how Caucasian teachers ignorant of native culture, could comprehend the economic realities of working a trapline in the northern forests: or how children helping on the line could comprehend the teacher's confident use of the words and concepts based on comfortable suburban life of Dick Jane and their non working dog Spot (p. 344).

White teachers, often with little understanding of native culture, were sent to Northern communities and to reserve schools in the south to teach aboriginal children. Unfortunately, many of these teachers knew very little about the lived experiences of First Nations people (Journal, 09/12/85; 06/06/88).

In the urban centres of Calgary and Edmonton, attempts at special programming began to emerge by the early 1980's. Alternative programs, like Awasis at Prince Charles Elementary in Edmonton, offered Native children lessons in Cree, "bannock making, bead working, painting and other traditional skills" (Journal, 01/12/87). The late 1980's also gave birth to schooling within an urban centre that was not just an alternative program within a school but was itself a school devoted to a particular type of programming. Ben Calf Robe within the Edmonton Catholic school district is an example of this type of schooling experience (Journal, 10/01/90) It is possible that the shift towards a greater awareness of Native concerns reflects a more educated and politically astute native population. Programs like Ben Calf Robe continued to develop albeit slowly into the last decade of the 20th century and on into the 21st century.

Summary

Throughout Alberta and the rest of Canada, the control of education for Native students, unlike other students who came under provincial jurisdiction, was determined and funded by the federal government. The failure of assimilationist policies and segregationist practices of the residential schools in the first half of the 20th century forced the Department of Indian Affairs to re-evaluate their objectives. In the years after

1950, the focus on Native Education moved toward integration in provincial schools. As Native groups began to form their own advocacy organization in the 1960's and beyond, they struggled to gain band control of Native Education, reverting back to a segregationist model in which the curriculum focused on traditional values and skills indigenous to individual communities.

I have given a very brief historical outline of the three curriculum strands in this study. This overview is not intended to be comprehensive but rather serves as a contextual framework addressing both space and time. I have relied heavily on the extensive research of others whose historical expertise in each of these areas has allowed me to extrapolate the common threads among the strands. For each strand, the 1950's appears to have been a watershed decade. It is probable that the years following the Second World War instigated a cultural introspection. In the years following the mid-century period, litigation, legislation, and organization characterized all three strands. There was clearly a movement within each strand to gain greater access to social power.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the thrust of the conceptual framework is three-pronged. The first section is concerned with understanding curriculum; the second part briefly examines how curriculum is represented through text and the last section reviews professional and public discourse on curriculum. The conceptual framework introduces the reader to concepts that are pivotal to understanding the nature of my study. Each section builds upon the information established in the previous section.

Understanding Curriculum

In my approach to understanding the notion of curriculum I have considered two aspects. The first is a brief commentary on definitions of curriculum; and the second highlights selected features of different curriculum orientations.

Defining Curriculum

Originally from the Latin word currere, curriculum was a reference to the path of a chariot race. Contemporary usage presents semantic challenges in much the same way as words like *education* and *schooling* or *language* and *communication*. The meaning can be arbitrary or, as van Dijk (1997) suggests about the word *discourse*, meaning can be fuzzy. Moreover, the meaning depends on the user and the context in which it is being used. Some educators, for example, may use the word curriculum to mean an official document originating from a government Department of Education while others may understand curriculum as actions and events reflecting the interplay of a wide range of social and historical factors related to schooling. In this dissertation curriculum is used in the latter sense of the word.

I think all discussions of curriculum, whether formal or informal, traditional or contemporary, at some level involve talk about content. Common usage suggests that content is concerned with the 'what' and 'should be' of specific subjects such as mathematics and language arts. Considered in a broader context, content reflects the core beliefs embedded in our social, political, economic and religious institutions. What can and should be taught is not only central to curriculum discussions but often rises to the surface of public debates concerning curriculum.

The language of curriculum, with which many of us are familiar, may be restricted to include only those aspects that reflect the Program of Studies; that is, what is expected to be taught in terms of content and how that content is to be organized (Bobbitt, 1924; Tyler, 1975). Commonly referred to as the formal or official curriculum, this interpretation is perhaps the most widely-used definition in practice.

In addition to the 'what' and 'should be' most commonly associated with issues of content, understanding curriculum also involves knowledge of delivery. Curriculum delivery may be interpreted as responding to the 'when', 'where', 'how' and 'to whom' questions posed in curriculum discussions. This perspective incorporates not only matters of process but the place in which the process occurs. For example, does the process take place in the traditional setting of the school? Is it in the home or perhaps elsewhere in the community? When is it developmentally, ethically and economically appropriate, efficient or expedient to do so? Are there times when it is not feasible to provide these services anywhere? If so, what are the conditions? Curriculum delivery is concerned with matters of time, place/space, audience and process.

Quality and assessment are integral to curriculum discussions and are frequently partnered with content and delivery. Curriculum history supports an ever-present need to evaluate and assess decisions about schooling. Typically, quality implicates normative decisions about what is good or right or worthy. Quality figures prominently in the public discourse about curriculum. Regardless of the assessment process established for programs, systems, actions or interactions related to any aspect of schooling, issues of quality remain central concepts in a public discourse on curriculum.

Curriculum, as it is used in this thesis, may incorporate all experiences that take place within the boundaries of the school that have to do with the teaching and learning processes. Curriculum involves not only learning and teaching that is planned but also that which is hidden or absent (Anyon, 1980; Lovat & Smith, 1995). Curriculum, in this view, responds to more than the questions of 'what can' and 'should be' taught, 'how' and 'why' this is taught. It also address the audience. To whom should this be taught? when? where? and to what extent? Here, curriculum encompasses those experiences which speak to the needs and rights of a diverse range of students.

As teachers, we know that understanding curriculum never forgets the practical because it operates in a world of practice. Curriculum involves a knowing about content, how that content is to be delivered and assessed. Theoretical constructs found in philosophy (Dewey, 1938), psychology (Bruner, 1960) and sociology (Apple, 1979) combined with the diverse contexts of history and culture frame the way in which curriculum is interpreted. Other factors such as cultural/ethnic diversity, environmental concerns, political and family values and global interdependence make their presence known in the ideas that form curriculum text. In my research, curriculum is interpreted broadly as a dynamic and interactive process of decisions and actions among individuals and between groups incorporating a range of social forces that ultimately colour the curriculum landscape.

Our shared understanding of curriculum allows us to talk about curriculum in terms of content, delivery, quality and assessment each of which is considered a curriculum indicator. The first three indicators provide the frame for the data represented in Chapter IV.

Curriculum Perspectives

Notions of what should constitute curriculum are highly emotive and have, perhaps, generated more controversy than any other area of schooling (Spencer, 1911; Dewey, 1938; Kliebard, 1986; Tomkins, 1986; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995; Wraga, 1999). Kliebard's assertion that "in any society, whether Aristotle or ours, there can be no unanimity of opinion at any given time on what is most worthwhile in our culture" (Kliebard, 1998, p. 31) points to the dialectic character of curriculum discourse.

I think a universal feature of curriculum is the continual revision and reshaping of what it means to understand curriculum. A history of those revisions, such as the one conducted by Pinar et al. (1995) reveals a variety of perspectives in curriculum discourse. Some perspectives had their roots in philosophical concerns while others were based on theories of learning. Knight (1989) cites examples of the latter in both the progressive and behaviorist approaches to curriculum. Teaching, as an applied science, organized around decisions about content, teaching behaviours, and learner behaviours can be found in the work of Madeline Hunter (1984). In this orientation, efficiency and economy are paramount considerations. Quality is measured by adherence to specific teaching practices and by the extent to which specific content is mastered (Hunter, 1984). If efficiency and economy are paramount considerations, then I think it is possible that other aspects of the curriculum such as the needs and rights of various groups may be relegated to positions of lesser importance. Hunter's focus on behaviours is still part of the discourse in teacher education programs throughout North America.

A curriculum orientation that aligns itself with a progressive position identifies the needs and interests of the child as the key organizing feature. The entire schooling experience is viewed as a microcosm of the larger democratic society and, ideally, learning experiences are structured according to that view (Dewey, 1938; Knight, 1989). Understood in these terms, delivery is achieved in an interactive, dynamic relationship. The quality of that curriculum is measured in terms of how successfully the needs of the children are met and integrated with those aspects of the curriculum that address democratic ways of being.

Eisner and Vallance (1974) illustrate differences in perspectives by focusing on selected dimensions of curriculum. When they analyzed assumptions about goals, content and the organization of that knowledge, they were able to categorize curriculum perspectives according to the way in which questions framing curriculum discussions were answered. An example from their analysis may be helpful in illustrating this point. In the *curriculum-as-technology* perspective, process plays a major role and the emphasis is not on the *what* of curriculum but on the *how* in much the same way as the orientation espoused by Madeline Hunter. "The curriculum (as) technology approach speaks the language of production" (Eisner & Vallance, 1974, p. 8). This perspective celebrates efficiency and control over the organization and presentation of content. The authors argue for an understanding of the principal assumptions underlying the various curriculum approaches as a means to understanding conflict in educational discourse. In particular, they point to the curriculum-as-technology perspective as one which warrants closer examination because of the potential to minimize the importance of other aspects of curriculum and the potential to overlook or ignore the fact that this orientation is not value-neutral but is in fact quite the opposite. In their curriculum analysis there is a caution to be attentive to the language of curriculum.

Curriculum approaches proposed by van Manen (1977), Aoki (1979) and Werner (1979) look to the philosophical framework provided by Habermas and ground their approach to curriculum as ways of knowing. Van Manen (1977) identifies these ways of knowing the world as empirical/analytic, hermeneutic/ philosophical and critical/dialectical (p. 205). Each way of knowing engages with the world through a particular view of the relationship between humans and their world. The empirical analytic orientation for example emphasizes a separation between person and world. Pinar et al., (1995) comment that "because "subject" and "object" are separate domains the empirical researcher understands "objectively" or definitively (p. 411). Human's way of being in the world "through the negotiation of meaning through communication" (Lovat & Smith, 1995, p 93) characterizes the hermeneutic/philosophical way of knowing. Van Manen (1977) adds that "within a hermeneutic frame work curriculum is seen as the study of education experience and as the communicative analysis of curriculum perspectives…" (p. 213). A third way of knowing (critical/reflective or critical dialectical) approaches an understanding of the world through man's relationship with others in social cultural and historical contexts. In this approach to curriculum the goal is to "establish interpersonal and social conditions necessary for genuine self understanding, emancipatory learning and critical consciousness" (ibid., p. 221).

Lovat and Smith (1995) referring to Habermas (1972), suggest that each of these ways of knowing are always present in curriculum. We should be concerned however if one way of understanding the world dominates the curriculum thus limiting the possibilities of our understanding. One example offered by Lovat and Smith (1995) is the technical way of knowing which sees control as the primary cognitive interest. Van Manen (1977) suggests the "preoccupation with the measurement of learning outcomes, the quantification of achievement and the management of educational objectives" (p. 209) are among the drawbacks to the dominance of this approach. Werner (1979), adopting a stance of critical reflection, identifies the importance of going beyond the descriptive purposes of curriculum to reflect on the implications of those beliefs.

Curriculum history offers substantive evidence that a number of orientations and interpretations of curriculum have evolved. Some orientations, incarnations of earlier perspectives, enjoy more than one lifetime. The present concern for example, with the technological is reminiscent of the 1960's and the focus on outcomes and objectives, achievement and efficiency. Curriculum perspectives evolve within a particular context, and cannot be isolated from the political, economic and social conditions of the time

(Pinar et al., 1995) Another way of approaching an understanding of curriculum perspectives is to see them as historically and linguistically situated. Consequently, they can never assume any kind of moral or social neutrality.

There will always be a number of groups within society whose interest in the schooling process will inevitably give rise to debate. A broad view is adopted in this research so as to include a range of curriculum dimensions that are found not only in scholarly work but in the public domain as well. Consequently, this perspective addresses issues of gender, race, social class, and ability.

Summary

The word curriculum is multidimensional in the sense that it may incorporate several aspects of the schooling experience. Interpretations of curriculum can be defined narrowly to mean a Program of Studies or, in its broadest sense, to encompass all those experiences and interactions that occur as part of the schooling process. In the interests of establishing a shared understanding of curriculum, it is common practice to talk about curriculum, in a public sense, in terms of content, delivery, quality and assessment.

Curriculum is continually reshaped as our understanding of what constitutes curriculum changes. A variety of factors and influences shape our interpretations, including policy statements and directives from government departments, ultimately resulting in a diverse repertoire of perspectives. Social and political influences are among those factors which contribute to the shaping of curriculum and by their very nature imply a representation of the interests of particular groups. I think it is the link to specific groups that invites the possibility for controversy.

Representing Curriculum Through Text

In common usage the word *text* conjures up images of used books passed on from one generation of students to another. Text in this context means assignments and required readings. Webster's New World dictionary (1970) lists more than 10 definitions for the word text. In the presence of a post-modern understanding of text, the list has grown longer. I have used the word *text* throughout this research to represent written discourse found in the documents under investigation. Text is also used to represent ideas implied in written discourse.

Altheide (1996) argues that all documents as texts reflect the process that produced them and that to analyze the text one must understand the process within which that text is created. This premise is also supported by Fairclough (1995) who comments that "processes of text production are managed through sets of institutional routines" (p. 48). I draw heavily on the work of Michael Apple to structure my view of the representation of curriculum through text because his work, with respect to uncovering the ideological nature of curriculum representations in official texts, reflects a progressive re-evaluation of ideas and understandings about curriculum and text over a period of three decades.

Official Texts

The production of the official texts of curriculum, (a responsibility of a government department) is a lengthy and complex procedure which involves many people at various levels of professional expertise. In Alberta, the official curriculum is presented in the Program of Studies and is set out by the government as legislated in the School Act. The Program of Studies includes the objectives and content for each subject as well as a rationale for the recommended approach to delivery.

In addition to the Program of Studies, official texts may include all those documents produced by Departments of Education and School Districts that relate specifically to the Program of Studies. Examples of documents produced by Departments of Education might include bibliographic material, lists of indicators and expectations and/or associated assessment and evaluation criteria. School Districts also produce similar materials, often overlapping the goals and objectives of Department of Education documents.

Official text about curriculum is also constructed in presentations and conferences conducted through the official channels of educational institutions.

Individual teachers or administrators, such as consultants, may produce documents for distribution at conferences or in-services. Official texts are not the only source of information about curriculum. Interpretations about the nature of curriculum may also originate from unofficial sources such as the media. An example of media text is that which is found in a newspaper.

Newspapers as Text

In newspapers there are various types of text which focus on diverse subjects. Any discussion of news media demands an understanding of the processes of news production (Scott, 1990; Bell, 1991; Altheide, 1996; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). According to Bell, "journalists rely heavily on other people's accounts of events in their authoring of stories" (p. 56) and are more likely to select text that has been formatted for the newspaper such as a press release or news agency copy. A piece that is of marginal value, produced by someone with a vested interest, may be selected over a topic that requires research and writing. What makes it in the news and what doesn't can be equally significant. Investigative reporting may be the exception rather than the rule in many newspapers (Bell, 1991; Hamil, 1998). Bell (1991) and others have indicated that, in addition to individually researched stories, newspaper journalists rely heavily on three print sources for many of their news stories. Of those sources, the bulk of news articles originate from news agencies such as Reuters or Canadian Press. This text is frequently repeated verbatim or altered only marginally when it appears in a newspaper (van Dijk, 1985). Even though the copy comes from outside the newspaper, it is not unknown for journalists to adopt a byline, thus taking credit for someone else's writing (Bell, 1991).

Bell (1991) provides a cautionary reminder that text submitted for editing may require several revisions and in the process may be subjected to input by a number of people before it reaches its final form, a process not dissimilar from the production of curriculum documents. Although journalists are often chastised for their bias in reporting, this aspect of the production of text in the newspaper speaks to the difficulty of assuming intent by any one journalist. Fairclough (1995) adds another caution when he suggests that "news documentary and other types of media discourse have a heavily embedded and layered character in the sense that earlier versions are embedded within later versions and constitute so many layers embedded within them" (p. 48).

A second source of news is the press release, which is most often submitted by individuals or organizations who can afford to hire writers. Government Ministers, government departments or large businesses fall into this category. Previous stories offer the third source of news stories, presenting what Bell refers to as the paradox of the news because often it involves inserting nothing more than a new paragraph into an old story. An example of the latter may be found in coverage of the charter school movement in Alberta by the Calgary Herald in the mid-1990's (See Calgary Herald, 01/19/96; 01/31/96; 03/12/96; 04/16/96).

Tuchman (1978) offers an interpretive approach to news which assumes that "news does not mirror society but rather helps to constitute it, for in the process of describing an event, news defines and shapes that event much as the news stories construed and constructed the early period of the modern women's movement as the activities of ridiculous bra burners" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 184). In her use of the women's movement as an example of an interpretive approach, Tuchman furthers our understanding of reality as a social construction. I believe how we talk about an event and how we organize that talk manipulates the way we think about the subject or object of the talk. When the talk becomes text, the organization of that text constructs new meaning both at the micro and macro level. A series of texts created over time, either deliberately or inadvertently, is a rich opportunity to inculcate new beliefs. Commentary on the practice of educational institutions is customary for most newspapers. The depth and breadth of that commentary is contingent upon a number of factors.

Newspapers and Education

In the past, newspaper studies approached from an educational perspective tended to reflect those things which could be measured quantitatively rather than those which can be explored in a qualitative sense. Between 1963 and 1972 for example, a number of doctoral studies (American) addressed various aspects of the relationship between the press and education (Tulk, 1984). A common thread among these studies was a focus on the amount of press generated about educational issues.

A number of studies specifically addressing media coverage of education and the nature of the relationship between schooling issues and media influence were carried out during the late 1970's and the mid to late 1980's in Canada (London, 1976; Gerwing, 1981; Debeck, 1984; Tulk, 1984; Fisher, 1988). Each of these studies assumed that newspapers were an important source of information for the general public and, as such, were an important source of information about schooling. Each study examined more than one newspaper and, given the prevailing paradigm of quantitative methodology, most employed traditional content analysis (words as count nouns) as a means of analyzing the articles.

Debeck's (1984) study, which included only those articles featuring the Minister of Education, found that the public was provided with a limited and distorted view of the issues in public education in British Columbia. De Riemer's (1986) quantitative/qualitative study of education coverage in award-winning and non award - winning newspapers found no significant difference between the two categories of newspapers studied during award winning years.

Tulk's (1984) study in Newfoundland indicated that the volume of press and public expression dedicated to education was directly related to the amount of controversy generated by a single issue. Of particular interest to this research is a common finding in all of the above studies, with the exception of the study conducted by Fisher (1988), that curriculum emerged not only as one of the most reported areas, but as an aspect of schooling that was likely to generate conflict. This overview suggests that research which is directed towards a close examination of curriculum coverage might illuminate our understanding of public discourse on education.

Summary

The production of official text for curriculum and the production of newspaper text reflect specific institutional processes and are the result of a number of efforts. The production of newspaper text is the culmination of a series of interrelated activities and practices indigenous to news production in print media. This production ultimately involves the input and consequently the interpretation, of a number of people. The final shaping of text may bear little resemblance to an original document. A challenge to the producers of newspaper text is to limit the margin for misrepresentation through omission. Social theorists like Tuchman believe that newspapers do not reflect reality but rather, in the processes of shaping text, construct reality.

Although studies using newspapers as primary source documents are not extensive in educational research, the findings of these studies point to the significance of curriculum discourse in newspaper text.

Public Discourse on Curriculum

In the simplest form the term discourse indicates text and talk representing a particular view (van Dijk, 1988). Discourse, however, is much more than what we say and how we say it. O'Shaughnessy (1999) highlights the features in discourse which also characterize ideology. In this interpretation, discourse encompasses social values, ideas, beliefs and representations, the essentials that constitute how we collectively make sense of the world. Lemke (1995) posits that "our discourses, what we mean by saying and doing, deploys the meaning-making resources of our communities" (p. 19). What is common to most of these interpretations is that discourse represents the ideas, social behaviours and belief systems that are embedded in text and talk. It is within the boundaries of the latter conception that I situate the use of discourse in this research.

Contemporary public discourses are often filtered through the processes of the mass media and are both shaped and constrained by the infrastructure of each medium (Tuchman, 1978; Altheide & Snow, 1979; Altheide 1985, 1996; Scott, 1990; Bell, 1991). Text and talk, which constitute the substance of public discourses, are reflected in conversation, speeches, news reports, opinion pieces and other social actions such as behaviour. Curriculum concerns represent the foreground of educational discourse and constitute much of the public discourse on schooling.

My work rests on an assumption that those who have access to public text have the potential to represent or re-present a public discourse. Research which examines the influence of mass media on society is generally approached from the disciplines of communication and media studies or journalism. There are, however, a number of studies that have crossed disciplines in an attempt to explore the boundaries of media culture. Although much recent work is concerned with the broadcast media, a number of studies address newspaper coverage specifically (Tuchman, 1978; Altheide & Snow, 1979, Altheide, 1985; van Dijk, 1985, 1988; Bell, 1991). In the following sections, I will address the connection between discursive practices in the newspaper and the professional discourse on curriculum.

Professional Discourse on Curriculum

Curriculum perspectives may be considered position statements because ultimately they reveal beliefs about what is worth knowing in the world and why. Consequently curriculum orientations can be interpreted as representing different agendas, including the political. Pinar's et al. (1995) meta-analysis of curriculum perspectives identifies various historical and contemporary discourses that have appeared throughout the 20th century in North America. Understanding curriculum as political text is identified as a significant discursive practice within contemporary perspectives. Unlike the period prior to the 1970's when curriculum was generally perceived as politically neutral, contemporary scholarship acknowledges that all curriculum can be interpreted as political text (Pinar et al., 1995).

The political nature of curriculum may be sustained on the grounds that all decisions regarding official curriculum are made by an institution that holds social power. This circumstance in particular places curriculum within a political arena. Curriculum as political text is concerned with ideology and power. Both Chomsky &

Herman (1988), and Lemke (1995) maintain that political text is characterized by assumptions of power and control.

Giroux and Apple adopted a stance which accepted power as a negative force in which ideological positions favouring the dominant group were reproduced through the process of schooling (Pinar et., 1995). In a later work, Aronowitz's & Giroux's (1993) conception of power relations uses the language of possibility to explicate the character of power. Building on Foucault's interpretation, they interpret power in dialectical terms, introducing the notion of power as a positive entity in curriculum discourse (ibid.). An understanding of power relations is offered by Fairclough (1989) who places the relationship between power and ideology within the context of language and discourse practices.

Aronowitz & Giroux (1993) and McLaren & Giarelli (1995) together with Apple (1993), point to the significance of language in curriculum orientations. Apple's (1993) approach to understanding curriculum uses the language of curriculum as the tool of analysis. Through the conceptualization of official knowledge, curriculum perspectives emerge that are characterized by their ideological signposts. In their discussion of curriculum, Lovat & Smith (1995) identify ideology as a central in the understanding of curriculum as political text. The changeable nature of ideology is recognized by Lemke (1995) as the primary difficulty in establishing a common understanding of the concept. Within the boundaries of my research, ideology is understood to mean the collection of beliefs which govern the way we understand the world, and as something that is dynamic rather than static.

The political lens does not provide a clear view, however. Within this orientation, there is disagreement among critical scholars regarding models of curriculum interpretation. Apple (1993) questions the wisdom of adopting a curriculum perspective that is framed in language which is focused primarily on the *how* of curriculum to the neglect of the *what* and *why*. This critical stance comes from an orientation to curriculum which is mindful of the common good as opposed to one which isolates certain groups in positions which are privileged. Whose knowledge is of most worth becomes the salient question. Apple's (1993) analysis, like Kliebard's (1986) and Werner's (1979), is an invitation to be attentive to the various discourses layered within the curriculum and to the ways in which those discourses seep into public discourse about schooling.

Aronowitz & Giroux (1993) also challenge some critical theorists, whom they accuse of being reductionist in their thinking, to consider the possibilities of human agency in curriculum perspectives positing that curriculum is not a passive entity to be acted upon by dominant groups but rather is characterized by its dynamic and interactive qualities. While recognizing the trustworthiness of the notion of agency, Apple does not relinquish the belief that ideological positions subtly wind their way through the maze of curriculum discourses. He reminds us that what passes for official knowledge must always be held up to inspection in light of the social context from which it emerges (Apple, 1993, 1996b, 1999).

With the increasing popularity of postmodern and poststructuralist positions and a perception that some areas of critical scholarship suffered from reductionist thinking, it has become unfashionable in recent years to view curriculum as political text (Pinar et al., 1995). This position has held ground even though mounting evidence of a rhetorically structured crisis in education might indicate a reconsideration of that position (Dehart, 1992; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Purpel & Shapiro, 1995; Apple, 1999).

Egan's (1998) interpretation of the curriculum debate minimizes the significance of stakeholders such as media, corporations and parents. He points instead to the presence of three central ideas as the key to understanding curriculum debates: the process of socialization, Plato's notion of reality and the function of academic curriculum, and Rousseau's conception of natural development. These ideas, he claims, are the bedrock upon which all curriculum perspectives rest. To understand the positioning of these ideas is to understand the conflict among stakeholders.

Conflict, however, may also be understood in terms of opposing ideologies within the larger society. How these ideologies are filtered through the text of public discourse is pivotal to the research undertaken in this study; thus whose knowledge is of most worth guides the direction of the inquiry. As Carspecken & Apple (1992) observe, "to think seriously about education, like culture in general, is to think just as seriously about power and the mechanisms through which certain groups assert their visions, beliefs and practices" (p. 580).

Curriculum, Public Discourse and the Daily Press

When conceptualizing the field of curriculum history, Tomkins (1979) quoting Egan), suggests that there are two approaches that one might take; as a history of the course of study, or as a history of how the course of study was made. In the latter instance, emphasis is placed on "the social, *political* and other forces" (ibid., p. 2) that shape the focus and direction of both the formal and informal curriculum. As an agent of social and political forces, the media serve a function in constructing particular understandings of schooling issues.

Early studies in sociology laid the groundwork for a research approach that focused on the construction of knowledge in the news media (Goffman, 1974; Tuchman 1978). More recently, linguistics and sociolinguistics, which build on earlier findings in sociology, have offered a number of studies which explore the language of the media (van Dijk, 1988; Chomsky & Herman, 1988; Bell, 1991; Altheide, 1996). Some of these studies are conceptualized around notions of power and ideology and the role that language plays in orienting readers, viewers and listeners to particular ways of thinking. Wineberg (1991) comments that

> Language is not a garden tool for acting on inanimate objects but a medium for swaying minds and changing opinions, for arousing passions or allaying them. This is a crucial understanding for reading a newspaper, for listening to the radio, for evaluating campaign promises… (p. 519).

Chomsky & Herman (1988) postulated that the powerful are able to manage public opinion by controlling the terms of the media discourse. In the struggle to shape curriculum, Kliebard (1986) and Egan (1998) point out that various interest groups within society compete to have their voices heard Chomsky & Herman's position, explored through a number of international situations, rests on the assumption of propaganda in reporting the news. Kliebard's (1986) historical analysis of curriculum perspectives is predicated on the existence of dominant interest groups. He contends that "each interest group represents a force for a different selection of knowledge and values from culture and hence a lobby for a different kind of curriculum" (Kliebard, 1986, p. 8). Both suggest an agenda which favours one group over another that is not immediately apparent to the casual reader. Newspaper text and curriculum text both point to layers of discourse.

Access and Power

Van Dijk's continuing newspaper research on racism over a 10 year period (Bell, 1991; van Dijk, 1996; Altheide, 1996; Fairclough, 1997) examines the way in which "social power is being enacted, legitimized and reproduced in one major domain of dominance, that by white (European) groups over ethnic or racial minorities, refugees or other immigrants" (van Dijk, 1996, p. 91). This substantive body of work highlights among other things, the inequitable patterns of "…access to social resources, including the symbolic resources of communication" (ibid., p. 92).

While various groups such as parents, educators, governments and corporations all use the text of public discourses to bring attention to their way of thinking, there is some evidence to indicate that certain groups have greater access and therefore greater opportunity to present their arguments (Apple, 1993, 1995, 1996a; van Dijk, 1985; Bernstein, 1996).

In his identification of the media as a major cultural and ideological force, van Dijk comments that

> through special access to and control over the means of public discourse and communication, dominant groups or institutions may influence the structures of text and talk in such a way that as a result, the knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are more or less indirectly affected in the interest of the dominant group (1988, p. 85).

In a similar vein, Apple (1995) voices serious concerns about groups who have been able to define "often in very retrogressive ways" (p. viii), the debate in education.

That the parameters of the debate are achieved through the text of public discourse is a consistent theme in his writing. Public discourse via the newspaper offers a way to exercise power in ways that may be considered non-coercive. If representations are socially constructed and can be manipulated through the avenues of public discourse, I think it is a reasonable assumption that a byproduct of that process is the exercise of power.

Apple (1993, 1995) suggests that we are presently witnessing, in western societies, how *elements* of ideologies become dominant in our society rather than variations on the traditional right wing /left wing dichotomy most often associated with established political parties. This strategy, he offers, is filtered through a public discourse on education. Despite time, space and creative limitations which constitute the news process, those responsible for news reporting and publishing stand in a uniquely powerful position to represent a variety of curriculum interpretations that emerge in debates about schooling.

In suggesting that a new power bloc has been formed that equates education with declining international competitiveness and productivity, Apple alludes to the relationship between power and language. I understand Apple to mean that a new reality about education has been construed and constructed by borrowing elements of common-sense knowledge from everyday reality. In that way, there is an element of truth for a large number of people and, unless that connection with a shared reality is there, then the power of the new discourse is lost. One of the ways that this new reality is fashioned is through the texts of public discourse.

Language of the Media

Much of what people believe to be true about the circumstances of schooling, may come from sources whose credibility is generally accepted. These sources may advertently or inadvertently orient the writing so that what is revealed (or, conversely, concealed) privileges certain groups. Separating what is real from what is constructed to represent reality becomes problematic. This difficulty is exacerbated when particular constructions of reality are repeated and over time come to be believed, subsequently forming part of an everyday reality that is integrated into our common sense knowledge.

Berger and Luckmann's (1967) work derived from the insights of Alfred Schutz provides the foundation for many of studies examining the language of the media (See for example, Tuchman, 1978; van Dijk, 1988; Altheide & Snow, 1979; Altheide, 1996). In the words of Berger and Luckmann, "language is capable of not only constructing symbols that are highly abstracted from experience, but also of bringing back these symbols and appresenting them as objectively real elements in everyday life" (p. 40). What we believe to be true and why influences our perceptions of the world and consequently our responses to those perceptions.

Berger and Luckmann's (1967) approach to understanding common-sense knowledge in the everyday world emanates from a phenomenological perspective. In their interpretation, common-sense knowledge is shared knowledge and "contains innumerable pre-and quasi-scientific interpretations about everyday reality which it takes for granted" (p. 20). In this interpretation, language plays an important role in the conception of shared realities. How news reporters choose to represent and interpret differing perspectives through their choice of language or, alternatively, choose not to represent perspectives, contributes in shaping a particular reality about schooling.

Representation and Re-presentation

Representation is a key concept in this research. It has, as O'Shaughnessy (1999) points out, three different meanings; "to look like or resemble; to stand for something or someone else; to present a second time or re-present" (p. 40). Each of those meanings, he argues, is common to both language and media which are both systems of representation.

Newspaper text about curriculum is both a *representation* and a *re-presentation*. Events, ideas, and conversations in the public text about curriculum are *represented*, as facts related to schooling, but they are also *re-presented* through the institutional processes of selection, repetition and other shaping practices as something quite different. The presentation of this study is both a *representation* and *re-presentation* of the newspaper text about curriculum.

I believe that one of the strengths of language is the power to shape reality through textual representation. An illustration of this power can be observed in situations where conceptual orientations are repeated with some frequency in a variety of contexts. Tuchman (1978), Chomsky & Herman (1988), and Bell (1991) all offer examples from media studies which illustrate this point. Although I use *representation* throughout the thesis as a matter of convenience, I am cognizant of the semantic differences between *re-present* and *represent.*

Summary

I have indicated that professional discourse about curriculum illustrates the link between curriculum perspectives and political text. Curriculum perspectives may be interpreted as position statements which are connected to political agendas. This way of viewing curriculum is considered a significant discursive practice among contemporary discourses about curriculum. Notions of how power and control function in ideological orientations figure prominently within that discourse.

Curriculum theorists such as Kliebard, Apple and Giroux suggest that various groups compete to have their voices represented in the text of public discourse about curriculum. Media studies such those undertaken by van Dijk, indicate that some groups have greater access to the text of public discourse than do other groups, hence the link between power and language. Apple's work underscores this link as he points to the repeated appearance of ideological elements in public discourse about schooling. The text about curriculum represented in the media may be accorded a credibility and authority previously reserved for academic, legal or religious text. This authority permits the construction of a reality about schooling that may go unchallenged.

The public nature of schooling debates, which often point to curriculum as their focus, has long been a tradition in Canada as in many other western countries. In both traditional and contemporary debates about education, specific discourses (such as reform) emerge as a natural function of the evolutionary process of growth in educational ideas and practice. If reform discourse, for example, signals a version of reality about schooling that is in conflict with prevailing common-sense knowledge or that risks the foundational principles of the common good, then it becomes prudent to be attentive to the ways in which the characterization of schooling is represented; to listen closely to the voices that are raised in indignation and to ask the critical question, "Who stands to gain by this representation?" Curriculum issues provide a starting point for that attention because they represent the core issues of schooling; they speak to the soul of education, the philosophical foundations upon which the schooling process rests. In the methodology section of this thesis, the question of who stands to gain is considered in the discussion of possibilities for analysis.

CHAPTER III: ENGAGING THE RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The ontological and epistemological assumptions which distinguish qualitative from quantitative research provide a framework for this study. Qualitative research is characterized by an assumption that reality is both subjective and multiple (Cresswell, 1994). In Chapter II, I introduced the work of Berger and Luckmann (1967) and Tuchman (1978) in my reference to the social construction of knowledge. Tuchman's research demonstrated how news stories constructed a reality about women. This chapter examines the way in which I approach an understanding of how the newspaper used its text to re-present a text about curriculum.

All qualitative research focuses on meaning and in that respect can be characterized as interpretive. Interpretive approaches fall under various categories each shaped by its own philosophical orientation and assumptions. The concept of multiple realities implicates the involvement of hermeneutic principles and suggests a way of approaching data that recognizes layers of interpretation. I open the chapter by offering a survey of various approaches to the interpretation of documents and include a rationale for the approach used in this study.

This is followed by a narrative description of the experience of living the research. I have approached the writing of the second section from a reflective stance including both reflections and revelations as they occurred in the moment of experiencing various stages of the process. Although the experience of research is different for each individual and exact experiences cannot be replicated, I think it is helpful, in the spirit of collaborative research and collective understandings about process, to share one's experience of the iterative nature of research.

In the remaining sections of the chapter I address the limitations and delimitations of the study as well as the issues surrounding concerns of validity.

APPROACHES TO DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Objective Content Analysis

Manning and Cullum-Swan (1998) characterize content analysis as "a quantitatively oriented technique by which standard measurements are applied to metrically defined units and these are used to characterize and compare documents" (p. 228). In the past, it was common practice in research studies using newspapers as the primary data source, to employ what Altheide (1996) has referred to as an objective content analysis. This approach rested on the assumption that a 'true knowledge' could be revealed if the appropriate methodology was employed. Traditionally, content analysis measured the frequency and extent of messages. The term 'count nouns' is used to describe the process of data gathering. Specific words in the text are actually counted in terms of their frequency of appearance and this information is used to determine the meaning of the message. Data analysis is statistical and narrative and the presentation of information is commonly done via tables and charts. One of the criticisms of content analysis is the inability to access context. Words are examined in isolation and are disconnected from the immediate semantic environment. The role of the researcher is not integrated into the analysis. The protocol, rather than the researcher, is significant. In recent times, as the dominant mode of thinking shifted from objective to subjective possibilities, interpretive approaches such as ethnographic content analysis gained wider acceptance.

Ethnographic Content Analysis

Ethnographic analysis is based on the principles of qualitative data collection and analysis. Altheide (1996) and Altheide and Johnson (1998) combined objective content analysis with the more recent approach of participant observation to form what he describes as ethnographic content analysis or "how a specific researcher interacts with documentary materials so that specific statements can be placed in the proper context for analysis" (Altheide, 1996, p. 24). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) identify the response to cultural documents as a key element in ethnographic studies. The researcher is not only concerned with the text of the document but is interested in the response of individual readers/spectators. Documents are combined with individual and group interviews to form the data base. The research goal is discovery then verification and the emphasis is on validity. The progression from data collection to analysis and interpretation is reflective and circular. The data may involve both numbers and narrative and the analysis is both textual and statistical (Altheide, 1996). Ethnographic analysis is "not oriented to theory development but is more comfortable with clear descriptions and definitions compatible with the materials" (Altheide, 1996 p .7). The focus in ethnographic content analysis is on concept development, data collection and emergent data analysis. There is also an emphasis on validity. My research bears many similarities to the ethnographic content approach, but although I draw upon Altheide's work to explicate process in the news industry and we share a similar theoretical framework, there are some differences. Interviews do not constitute any part of my methodology and the question of validity, which is addressed at the end of this chapter, does not present itself in the manner of other types of interpretive studies.

Semiotic Analysis

Document analysis can also be approached from a semiotic perspective. This line of inquiry is concerned with the analysis of one document rather than multiple documents. Intention figures prominently in semiotic analysis with an emphasis on "trying to unravel the author's assumptions, motives and intended consequences" (Altheide, 1996, p. 7). Guided by an interactionist perspective, the semiotic approach seeks "to strip away lies and stylistic obfuscations, and to discover therefore the deeper or real meaning of a written text" (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1998, p. 257). Semiotic analysis is essentially an analysis of symbolic systems of which language is but one among many. There is a focus on linking the expression of the sign (word, sound, symbol) with the content (meaning). Linking content and expression "is social and depends upon the perspective of the observer" (ibid., p. 252). Meaning of any sign system is arbitrary and is dependent upon the interpretant or context. When the interpretant changes, the sign changes meaning. The notion of culture figures prominently in decoding the meaning of the various sign systems. Text of various types including written, is perceived as being multi-modal (Kress, Leite-Garcia & van Leeuwn, 1997, p. 257); that is, text can no longer be thought of in terms of language alone. The multi-modal view assumes that several "semiotic modes are always involved in any textual production or" reading (ibid. p. 269). In newspaper, for example, one must consider the size and spacing of print, the lettering, the colour of the print, visual images which accompany the text, etc. The focus in semiotic analysis is usually on a single document. My study represents an analysis of several hundred documents so the methodology in semiotic analysis would not be appropriate. The intent of individual authors does not constitute part of my research.

Linguistic and Socio-linguistic Analysis

Linguistic analysis tends to look at how language functions within meaning structures such as phrases, sentences or paragraphs or what linguists refer to as "semantic representations" (van Dijk, 1997). It is primarily focused on the technical aspects of language such as grammar and syntax, phonemes and morphemes and may be considered to be a study of the science of language. In this type of analysis, language is studied as separate and distinct from the language user. Linguistic analysis is concerned with how language functions at the micro level as opposed to the macro level, which looks at global meanings.

Fairclough (1995) comments that socio-linguistic analysis is common in media studies. He opines that much of the work done in this area, such as the research conducted by Bell, focuses "upon variable linguistic features and variable aspects of social context" (ibid., p. 21). My work is concerned with the macro meanings associated with large amounts of text over time. It is not concerned with micro relationships between and among words as in the science of language.

Hermeneutic Inquiry

All of the methodologies mentioned previously have been used to interpret newspaper text. All, in some form or another, try to answer questions about meaning through language. What meaning does the language convey? How do we interpret the language of our data? What is interpretation? Stock (1990), speaking about historicism, observes that semiotics, linguistics and hermeneutics have all contributed to the "interdependence of all modes of interpretation" (ibid., p. 6). I think this observation is important to my study because it also recognizes the challenges in isolating one genre of interpretation. Understanding what it is to understand has a long history in the western world. Thus far I have briefly addressed semiotic, linguistic and ethnographic approaches as modes of understanding document text. Now I turn to hermeneutic inquiry.

Hermeneutics is "a tradition concerned with the contextualized interpretation of symbolic forms" (Thompson, 1995, p. 8). In hermeneutics, interpretation is perceived as a circular process which can be understood through different conceptions of the hermeneutic circle. The circular process of interpretation is found in the reciprocal relationship between the parts and the whole and the whole and the parts. Within that process, language and history are central concepts and the role of language and history, that is, how each functions in the process of interpretation, is contingent upon the particular hermeneutic orientation.

Hermeneutics has been described as both a method for understanding and a philosophy of understanding. Both Palmer (1969) and Gallagher (1992) depict the history of hermeneutics in the modern world as an evolutionary process moving from the original conception of hermeneutics in the 17th century as biblical exegesis, to a 20th century configuration defined in terms of phenomenological existentialism. In earlier conceptions, which defined text as a written document, interpretation was restricted to one genre of text. Over time the interpretation of text evolved in significant ways. What follows is brief chronology of some of the developments in the field of hermeneutics.

Early in the 19th century, Schleiermacher, who identified hermeneutics as the art of understanding, expanded the notion to include all texts, not just biblical and classical texts. Palmer (1969) points to the significance of linguistic understanding as

Schleiermacher's contribution to the study of hermeneutics. Palmer notes that Schleiermacher argued that grammar was the fundamental unity common to all texts (p. 84). For Schleiermacher, hermeneutics constituted two types of interpretation: the grammatical and the psychological, the latter being a recognition of author intent or the subjective side of interpretation.

By the end of the 19th century, Dilthey's critique of historical reason further developed the notion of hermeneutics to include the interpretation of human experience and brought to the study of hermeneutics the notion of historical understanding. Since we are always situated in history, we cannot separate ourselves from the historical process (Gallagher, 1992). As Palmer (1969) explains, "man does not escape from history, for he is what he is in and through history" (p. 117).

According to Palmer (1969), both Schleiermacher and Dilthey, followed later by Betti and Hirsch, understood hermeneutics as method; that is, as a set of rules and principles that could be applied to text, whether a written document or human experience. This conception, based on epistemological assumptions of knowing, credits the text as the keeper of meaning. Schleiermacher, for example, believed that understanding of all text could be achieved through the careful application of the principles of language. In this interpretation, knowledge is something which is discovered. It exists independently of the researcher. When the appropriate set of rules are applied (in this case, the relationship between grammatical structures), meaning can be uncovered.

Within this approach, an approach that Gallagher (1992) has described as the conservative tradition of hermeneutics, validity is understood in terms of reproduction and the ability to "reconstruct original meaning" (p. 208). The interpreter is able to "dissolve the hermeneutic circle in order to know the past according to its own standards, that is, to achieve historical objectivity and interpretative validity" (ibid., p. 209).

Following the work of Dilthey, there were two philosophers who brought a different focus to the field of hermeneutics. Martin Heidegger's radicalization of hermeneutics (*Being and Time*) in the 20th century as "the existential, phenomenological analysis of human behaviour" (Gallagher, 1992 p 4) followed by Hans-Georg Gadamer's theory in 1960 (*Truth and Method*), recast hermeneutics as philosophical theory based on ontological assumptions (Palmer, 1969, Gallagher, 1992).

Heidegger's assertion in 1927 of 'understanding' and 'interpretation' as "foundational modes of man's being" (Palmer, 1969, p. 42) does not consider hermeneutics in terms of a science or a set of rules or a methodology but rather and perhaps more importantly a condition of being. I say more importantly because this conception of hermeneutics moves understanding from the objective to the subjective. In this incarnation understanding cannot be separated from being. Gadamer, following Heidegger's ontological lead, conceptualized hermeneutics as "theory which illuminates the conditions of possibility for understanding" (Gallagher, 1992, p. 5).

As I mentioned previously in this section, the principle of the hermeneutic circle characterizes hermeneutics in much the same way that linguisticality and historicality do. Throughout the many transformations in the conceptualization of hermeneutics, textual interpretation has, in some form or another, dominated the history of hermeneutic studies (Gallagher, 1992). I think this characteristic is particularly relevant to my research because it points to a well established tradition of the scholarly interpretation of documents. It also provides the context within which the approach to my research can be situated.

It is the claim of historical objectivity that has generated considerable debate within the tradition of hermeneutic approaches. Both Palmer (1969) and Gallagher (1992) speak at length about the objectivity question and as Palmer (1969) points out, the possibility of objective historical knowledge is called into question (p. 46). The debate is an epistemological one addressing matters of validity and methodology.

Approach to this Study

Palmer (1969) suggests that our "very vision of reality is shaped by language" (p. 9). This research is fundamentally concerned with how a vision of reality is shaped by the language of the news media as represented in newspaper text. The emphasis on the centrality of language in the hermeneutical approach is an appropriate consideration for this study. Although the approach adopted in this research is primarily guided and influenced by the principles of philosophical hermeneutics, I have also borrowed elements of critical theory or critical hermeneutics. This can be seen in my reference to curriculum as political text and the discussions that are organized around interests and power.

Schwandt (1998) suggests that a defining characteristic of ontological hermeneutics is that "linguisticality and historicality are constitutive of being human" (p. 224) With the understanding that "the hermeneutical encounter is not a denial or negation of one's own horizon" (Palmer, 1969, p. 244), I approached my data cognizant of the influences of a teaching background and an understanding of curriculum issues that incorporated many years of experience. This preexisting understanding also incorporates, among other things, theoretical understandings that have become part of an accumulated cultural and social commonsense knowledge about schooling. This forestructure of understanding, is characterized in the philosophical tradition as indispensable to understanding (Teigas, 1995).

The interpretative activity in both moderate and critical hermeneutics demands engagement in a process of reflection.

> Interpretation is transformative. It illuminates, throws light on experience. It brings out, and refines, as when butter is clarified, the meanings that can be sifted from a text, an object, or a slice of experience. So conceived, meaning is not in a text, nor does interpretation precede experience, or its representation. Meaning, interpretation and representation are deeply entwined in one another (Denzin, 1998, p. 322).

In the critical tradition, reflection is seen as a way to achieve emancipation or 'ideological neutrality'. Reflection in my research, similar to that of philosophical hermeneutics, is pursued in order to achieve deeper levels of understanding. This will be evident to the reader in the analysis and in the final chapter where I offer commentary on my analysis. The latter is a critical reflection of the study in general and my analysis in particular.

Contrary to the tradition in philosophical hermeneutics, I direct some attention to the power relationships that are filtered through language in text; however, unlike critical hermeneutics, I do not take the position that the interpreter can move beyond the notion of a false consciousness to an objective understanding, despite the critical reflection. In fact, although I recognize the presence of power relationships and how they implicate social action, I do not necessarily perceive them in terms of false consciousness; that is, I try not to take a consciously normative position but instead see this as an opportunity to exercise the dialogic and the dialectic dimensions of the hermeneutical approach.

My connection is with a text that is situated in time and place and is related to other texts. The dialogic dimension can be understood as existing between myself, as the reader, and the text. Moreover, I conceptualize this connection as a listening to, rather than a listening for the voices embedded in the text. How is curriculum represented in the newspaper text? What is the text saying to me? What I hear is coloured by the context of my own experiences. The dialogic dimension is exploratory. It looks at possibilities in the back and forth movement between text and reader.

I make no assumptions here about the dialogic nature of reader and author. I do not believe, for example, that in the reading of the newspaper text I am having a conversation with the author. There is no presupposition of intent, although having said that, I do acknowledge that there is a recognition of the power to shape text through various processes inherent in the media industry.

The dialectical encounter, taking that which is familiar and interacting with the unfamiliar, presupposes a culture of questioning. What is familiar to me as a researcher allows me to engage with the text in the first place. For example, I can read the paper and I am familiar with many of the issues related to curriculum. My schooling experiences presuppose ideas and opinions about curriculum. However, it is in the encounter with negativity, the unfamiliar, that we find true questioning (Palmer, 1969). In the dialogue with the text, which I perceive as continuous, I naturally confront much that is unfamiliar. The questioning itself is the result of the negative encounter. In the philosophical tradition, the hermeneutic circle never closes. In this research, I move back and forth between the unfamiliar and the familiar, replacing one interpretation with other ever increasing levels of understanding.

Summary

My document analysis was approached from a qualitative paradigm. Semiotic, ethnographic, linguistic and hermeneutic inquiries each operate within a tradition that considers various aspects of language in interpretive process. In semiotic analysis, language is one among many symbolic systems that are studied. Usually only one text or document is the subject of the research. Linguistic analysis leans towards the science of language and individual parts of speech are studied in relationship to larger units of language. Words in relationship to sentences and sentences to paragraphs are examined in the presence of a well defined methodology. Again, single texts or documents are the norm and are compared against other individual documents. In socio-linguistic studies, meaning is sought through the "correlation between variable linguistic features and variable aspects of social context" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 21).

Generally speaking, certain principles that characterize the contemporary conceptions of hermeneutics have particular relevance to my study. Specifically, those principles are organized around the role of tradition and the centrality of language in interpretation. I adopt the view that interpretation is always historically situated, not in the sense of chronology but in the sense that I as the interpreter stand in the time and space of the traditions of language and social actions that came before me and constitute who I am in the present. Although my study examines newspaper texts situated in the past, it is the relationship to the present that is of significance. As the interpreter, I am that link to the present.

I have approached the body of data with the understanding that the language used in the texts that are being interpreted is not value neutral. Unlike critical hermeneutics, I do not perceive these conditions or factors influencing those values as being situated outside the hermeneutic relationship, but rather I see these as constitutive of the hermeneutic situation. Moreover, the language I use to analyze those texts also constitutes the hermeneutic process and is itself ideologically constrained. The presence of bias in my interpretation does not render the analysis invalid. Conversely, it represents one dimension of curriculum representations within the possibility of many, which are also equally ideologically restricted.

The notion of critical reflection is integral to my research; however, in keeping with the philosophic tradition, reflection is perceived as a continuous process. Each reflection enables me to revisit the text with a new understanding. It is the continual moving back and forth between the familiar and the unfamiliar that allows for deeper levels of understanding.

NOTIONS OF TEXT

The notion of text is rooted in hermeneutic tradition and is evident in the various conceptions of hermeneutics. It also permeates the body of this research. Palmer's (1969) comment that "the hermeneutical experience should be led by the text" (p. 244) underlines the place of text in interpretive studies. I use the term text in the sense of "an artifact, capable of transmission, manipulation, and alteration, used and discarded, reused recycled - "doing" different things contextually through time" (Hodder, 1998, 112). In this study text refers to the documents under study. In this study the use of newspaper documents as text is reminiscent of earlier notions of text.

LIVING THE RESEARCH

Introduction

During my graduate program I had the opportunity to do an independent study in another department (History and Classics). I carried out a project which involved the collection of two years of articles from the Journal during the second and third decades of the 20th century. The purpose of the research was to explore the tone of articles about schooling during a time characterized by economic crisis. It was through this experience that I became familiar with the complex process of collecting and analyzing large quantities of newspaper data over an extended period of time. The data were viewed on microfilm and reproduced in hard copy. Although time consuming, it was a valuable experience in terms of the preparation for a much larger undertaking.

Another project involved an analysis of articles from a number of newspapers and journals collected over a five year period for the purpose of evaluating the media coverage of charter schools in Alberta. My involvement in the latter project did not require that I collect the data. The clipping service, hired by the Government of Alberta, supplied its collection on request. Information received from employees at the clipping service indicated that the government file would not meet the needs of this study. Fortunately I was able to access the collection at the Edmonton Public School Board archives.

Although it is common to think of the investigation process in terms of the specific stages such as collecting, coding, etc., the living of a research experience is rarely predisposed to the neat, sequential progression of steps. It is more commonly an iterative expedition. Traveling back and forth between the texts you are reading and rereading, and the texts you are constructing and reconstructing, can seriously blur the image of what was originally conceived of as a well organized plan. In the remainder of this chapter, I have tried to include those dimensions of my research that capture the research process and to feature those aspects which may be helpful to researchers considering studies of this nature in the future. I have organized this section according to traditional indicators of the research process, and within these boundaries, I have offered some general commentary about various stages of the process. Each section is capped by highlighting challenges that presented themselves in the course of the research.

Data Collection

During a six month collection period I photocopied newspaper articles from the Edmonton Public School Archives for each of the ten months which make up the school year (Sept. -June). The collection covered a ten year span (1984/85-1993/94) and the selection of articles was guided by the parameters established in the definition of curriculum outlined in the original proposal. Thus any article that fell under the jurisdiction of curriculum (what can and should be taught to whom, by whom, how, when, why or where), controlled the selection of articles. Each article received a cursory reading prior to photocopying. Sometimes the suitability of an article could be determined from the headlines, but in most cases the article required a preliminary scanning.

It took more time than I had anticipated to think about what I needed to collect and to effectively organize the procedure. After some experimentation I developed a list to eliminate articles that were not suitable. Photographs were not included in the collection because they required a different kind of expertise for analysis. Initially, sports announcements, deaths or accidents involving teachers and students, school closures, strike actions, articles originating outside Alberta, surveys, profiles of schools, or teachers, continuing education, and post secondary education were not included. Articles appearing in *Neighbours*, a weekly supplement to the Journal, were not included because distribution was limited to the Edmonton area. Articles and announcements appearing in the sports section were not collected because the time and effort required to weed through the bulk of announcements and scores to extrapolate relevant information was not considered efficient or fruitful with respect to data analysis.

Following a period during which I had collected several months of articles, I revised the plan to collect as broad a range of curriculum dimensions as possible. In light of that decision, I re-evaluated my decision regarding the category of exclusions and the revisited earlier months in the collection process to check for missing articles. Although much of the data would not be used for the core analysis I recognized that seemingly extraneous articles, (which eventually comprised the bulk of the collection) would provide context for those strands being analyzed. Reading, writing and preliminary analysis constituted the period of collecting.

Challenges

The archival collection was made up of clippings from several sources (newspapers and newsletters) and demanded much extra time sorting. Once the Journal articles had been separated from the main collection, more time was needed to sort those articles. It was not uncommon, for example, to find September articles in the October files or those from the beginning of the month included with the articles at the end of the month. Since all of the clippings were stapled together they had to be separated for sorting and photocopying and then resorted and filed. However, the advantages of being able to access an existing collection outweighed the minor inconveniences mentioned above.

Initially, a pattern for the collection and analysis of data was proposed that followed some of the practices developed by Altheide (1996). These practices included developing a protocol to track information and manage the data. As the collection of data progressed, however, it soon became evident that I had underestimated the number of articles related to curriculum; thus, to complete a protocol for each article was prohibitive.

Field Notes

Recording field notes was an ongoing process which had to be maintained throughout all stages of reading, not only to track the evolution of ideas and possibilities for further investigation but to provide a body of text that represented various stages of analysis. During the collection period I made daily field notes. These consisted of commentary, questions, and ideas for coding that emerged in the preliminary reading. These notations were recorded on the documents. I also briefly summarized each article collected for the first three years of the study.

In subsequent months I continued to make notes including examples and references to related commentary in other articles. Other notations included the structure of the article, reference to articles where the information had been repeated, who was interviewed, their position, and gender.

Later field notes were transcribed onto index cards and filed according to the coding categories. A separate section was maintained for queries, relationships among the strands, relationships outside the strands, gaps in the literature review and recommended reading. During the period that I was becoming familiar with the articles, I developed the habit of colour highlighting passages and quotes that appeared significant.

Challenges

The documents were cluttered with comments and coloured passages, each representing different stages in the process of understanding. Although relevant quotes were easy to find and this method of housing the field notes was very helpful in later stages of the analysis, it was very distracting when revisiting the text for different purposes.

One of the biggest challenges regarding the field notes was trying to establish the most productive method of note taking. During the early stages of the study it is likely that I recorded too much information and became bogged down in the data. Later, I was able to refine my approach reflecting a manageable focus.

Coding

First stage: Exploratory Coding

To develop a first order coding I selected all of the articles in the first year of the study and made a month by month list of the topics that appeared in the articles. Following this I prioritized the topics according to frequency of appearance. This list suggested some general themes which I identified as *Public Education Issues*, *Private Education*, *Curriculum Programs*, *Special Needs*, *Native Education* and *Teacher Education*. I used this tentative coding system to organize the data for the school years 1984/84, 85/86 and 86/87 according to months, briefly summarizing each article as I read it. It soon became evident however that this was not the most efficient way of coding the data. The sheer volume of material devoted to curriculum and the time required to process that information for the purpose of analysis demanded a re-evaluation my approach. To conclude this stage I organized three years of summarized data under their respective headings. For example, everything I had summarized about Native Education for each month of the first three years was organized chronologically and presented as a continuous reading in the manner of a narrative. This reading presented the data in a form that allowed other possibilities for examination to emerge.

Second Stage: Primary Data

It was at this juncture that a decision was made to isolate selected curriculum strands and to follow the trail of representation for these strands throughout the ten years, rather than attempt to address all aspects of curriculum during that period. That decision was predicated on the basis of two factors. Firstly, the data revealed a number of articles related to the Discussion Papers released by the government-appointed Committee on Tolerance and Understanding (described in Chapter I & II). In 1984/85, a significant portion of education coverage in the Journal was devoted to Native Education, Special Needs Education and Private Education. This in itself offered a possible focus for organizing curriculum concerns. Secondly, the preliminary investigation indicated that all three strands were linked in ways that warranted further investigation.

Following the decision to track these curriculum strands over ten years, it was necessary to revisit the primary collection of several thousand articles in order to extrapolate individual articles related to each of the three strands. The process of extrapolating, repeated for each strand, functioned in three ways. It allowed for a cursory skimming of all the articles in the collection, consequently providing a stronger sense of the flow of educational concerns during the 10 year period. Secondly, it situated specific issues in the larger neighbourhood of schooling concerns and lastly, a singular focus reduced the chance of missing articles.

Initially I organized the collection for each strand (including field notes and visual displays of information such as graphs and charts) chronologically. Each collection was then read as a narrative several times over a period of months.

During these readings I recorded ideas for future inquiries such as the representation of voices or the continuity of reporting. I also began making connections to the larger data set and asked questions about the relationship among the strands.

Here I noted similarities of issues or common themes and considered various possibilities for coding.

Second Stage: Secondary Data

In the process of examining and re-examining the field notes, it became clear that in order to situate the curriculum discourse within at least one social domain, such as the economic or political, it would be necessary to revisit those articles which constituted the remainder of the collection. Since it had been several months since I had approached the articles, having revisited the literature and followed new sources, I relied on previous summaries to provide some guidance for a starting point.

Each article was read, summarized in one or two points and then coded according to the categories listed below:

- Government Legislation/reports/documents
- Curriculum Programs
- Funding
- Teacher education/concerns/policies
- Curriculum General
- Editorials
- Columnists
- Olive Elliott

Although I anticipated that that most of the topics could be collapsed under six or seven broad categories, it was essential to verify that this was true over time and that other categories did not reveal themselves in the interim. It should be noted that Olive Elliott was accorded a separate heading due to the sheer volume of articles on schooling in Alberta which she produced during the first five years of the study. The data collection specific to Elliott contained over 300 columns apart from the strand collection.

Two sets of visuals illustrating each category were constructed to represent the protocol organizing the above information.. The first set of visuals contained the yearly data while the second was a large colour coded chart displaying highlights from information in the various categories collected for the ten years. This strategy provided a substantive overview of the breadth of curriculum and permitted relatively quick movement among large quantities of data. A comparison of highlights among the ten years, for example, was easily determined by scanning the chart. I could also trace the evolution of any category by scanning the vertical columns of information.

Third Stage: Primary Data

The last stage of coding involved the data specific to the strands. The data were originally presented in terms of issues so it seemed a logical step to code according to issues. An example of an issue in the Private Education strand was Church vs State. A central issue in the Special Needs strand rising out of the development of the new School Act also centered on the notion of rights. Although I have given the example of rights, this coding structure gave rise to a number of themes or issues which connected all three strands; the link to funding issues is an example of such a theme. Subsequent to the examination of the strands from an issues perspective, I then re-coded all the data according to curriculum indicators. Multiple coding schemes permitted a familiarity with the data that allowed me to approach the data with deeper levels of understanding throughout the research process.

Challenges

During the early stages of reading one strand, I spent many hours writing before developing a satisfactory coding scheme that would apply to all of the strands. Deconstructing arguments within individual articles before examining a series of articles along a similar theme or identifying details such as whose voices were represented in individual articles provides two examples of inappropriate focus. Although some time was wasted because this approach did not suit this stage of the work, it did provide me with the opportunity to become familiar with the data and it did provide the seed for later types of analysis.

Another early mistake was attempting to code a large quantity of data before establishing necessity. Although I eventually did code all of the data, the coding for the extraneous data was not as rigorous.

Coding for the non-strand data was a formidable task and one which had appeared at an earlier stage of the research. This coding scheme involved several thousand articles in comparison to a few hundred in the strand data and was very time consuming.

Returning to the strand data after some distance from it, I began the process of identifying voices. It involved a close reading of the articles to determine whose voices were heard in the various discourses. I wanted to see what kind of patterns evolved and what if any relationship these patterns had to relations of power. This impetus for this step was based on some notes I had made during the various readings. It was not long however before I began to question the wisdom of this action. The problem-solving nature of the methodological component of the research process appeared at almost every stage of the work. The question of how best to represent the voices at the first level of analysis fell into this category. Should I, for example, include only those people who were quoted directly in interviews or should I also include those voices whose voices were mentioned in the article? What place did the regular columns and editorials have among the voices and how should I incorporate the collective and individual voices of the journalists? Ultimately I tried to include all voices. Sometimes those voices were represented individually as in the case of education columnist Olive Elliott while other times they were represented collectively as female journalists or male journalists. Voices separate from the voices of the journalists were categorized according to gender, according to position and, in some cases, according to frequency of repetition.

Reading

Although reading the data occurred throughout the research experience, each stage of reading, each revisiting, presupposed a different purpose, thus exposing the dialectic nature of the process. In the period after the collection of the articles for example, I initially read only those articles in the school year 1984/85, approximately 300 in total. I wanted to see if the articles could be loosely organized under some general headings. This was followed by a reading to determine which areas were receiving the most coverage and why.

Much later, the organization of the articles changed as subsequent readings suggested alternative ways of viewing the text. It was evident from the onset that multiple readings were an essential component of the analysis process and that identifying a purpose for each reading, an interpretive act in itself, was mandatory. The paradox of opening up the reading through numerous re-readings and the restrictions imposed by setting a purpose for those re-readings speaks to one of the problematics embedded in the interpretive process.

Narrative Reading

I approached the first complete reading of each strand in a narrative sense, as one might approach a novel, aware of some limitations but open to a wide range of possibilities. The reading and re-reading opened up the possibilities for understanding in a way that may be considered transformative. I entered the unfamiliar in the context of the familiar and emerged each time with new understandings. These understandings allowed me to enter into spaces that I did not know were present. It was as Manguel described:

> We never return to the same book or even the same page, because in the varying light we change and the book changes, and our memories grow bright and dim and bright again, and we never know what it is exactly what it is we learn and what it is we forget and what it is that we remember (Manguel, 1996, p. 64).

Hodder (1998) has commented that when a "text is reread in different contexts it is given new meanings, often contradictory and always socially embedded" (p. 111). Thus each time a text is re-read it is always a new context since we are bringing new understandings to the text that were not there during the previous reading.

Since my intent while reading the documents was to be attentive to the voices in the text I experienced the text through listening and a reading. Palmer (1969) comments that "the hermeneutical experience should be led by the text. The text is not fully analogous to a partner in dialogue because it must be helped to speak" (p. 244). During the continuous reading and re-reading of the newspaper text, there were times when I found it hard to listen because my own voice interfered, insistent, pushing other agendas. In those moments when the silence of my own voice was loud, I was able to hear the conversations in the text. These conversations took place on many levels and I was only aware of them in light of each subsequent reading.

Presentation of Findings

In the early stages of analysis, it was evident that the notion of issues was a key feature emerging from the data and in preliminary drafts of the research I attempted to present the findings in terms of issues. Even though there were common threads among the issues throughout each strand I found that presenting the data in this manner did not adequately reflect the substance of the data. Organizing the data through curriculum indicators permitted an analysis that incorporated the original questions, focused on curriculum and incorporated the issues. The presentation is of course a representation and a re-presentation of the data.

Summary

Regardless of preplanning, each stage of the research process entailed challenges that could not be anticipated and did not reveal themselves until the moment of involvement. Collecting, reading, re-reading, writing, coding and analyzing were rarely discrete actions.

LIMITATIONS

Collection of Articles

This analysis is based on Journal articles taken from the archival collection (which also contained clippings of four other newspapers and one news magazine) at Edmonton Public School Board. According to information obtained from the EPSB archivist, recent clipping criteria are listed below:

- Edmonton Public School Board (Trustees)
- Edmonton Public Schools (superintendent, personnel)
- Any Edmonton Public School
- Any mention of a School Board
- Any mention of a school
- Any mention of a post secondary school
- Alberta Education
- Alberta Learning
- Classroom/teacher/student
- Education (ie. taxes)
- Unions

The archival collection is not a complete set, in that it does not contain every article on education. Therefore, it does not contain every article related to curriculum published by the Journal during that time period. The collection reflects clipping selections made by various personnel during a ten year period according to the criteria listed above. For a short time during one year of the study, the support staff at EPSB were involved in a strike action, consequently there were fewer articles available for viewing. It is also recognized that significant articles may have been omitted from the collection for reasons peculiar to individual personnel and may include such things as oversight, personal judgment and absenteeism.

In the early stages of collection each day of two months from three different years representing the beginning, middle and end of the collection period, was cross referenced with the newspaper data on microfilm. Based on that limited survey (70%-80% of articles were the same as those on microfilm) and considering the limitations previously mentioned, it was determined that data set at the archives supported the methodological and analytical approaches in this research. There was abundant material to facilitate a legitimate discussion of curriculum representation in the Journal.

During the process of comparing microfilm data to the archival collection, it was noted that the microfilm collection for the period examined in the 1980's, sometimes but not always, contained both morning and afternoon editions of the newspaper. It was further noted that articles appearing in one edition on a particular day did not always appear in the other edition of the same day. This factor was not taken into consideration since the primary source of data for the research was selected from the archival collection. The clippings rarely indicated whether it was a morning or afternoon edition. Also noted in the 1980's microfilm data was the occasional practice of repeating the same article in a another section of the newspaper under a different headline. Since it was not possible to collect examples relating to this practice from the archival collection for analysis purposes, this factor was not taken into consideration for this study.

Judgments based on my assessment of what was significant to this research, further limited the selection of articles. This occurred despite the fact that a broad range of articles was gathered during the collection stage.

Hermeneutic Approach

The hermeneutic approach is limited by the particular tradition within hermeneutics to which one is oriented. The hermeneutic approach has been criticized relative to the debates which constitute hermeneutic discourse. I have borrowed from Gallagher's (1992) analysis in terms of some of the central issues in hermeneutics to explore those areas that may reflect the limitations and challenges encountered in my own research. According to Gallagher (1992), conservative hermeneutics argues that in order for an interpretation to be valid, it must be objective. This stance makes the claim that objectivity is achieved through the exact reproduction of the author's intent, that is, through the reproduction of the original meaning. Original meaning can be established through a rigorous methodological approach involving the decoding of language. It is very clear that this approach assumes that there is a correct way to interpret. An opposing view (Gadamer) argues that objectivity can never be a reality, that we can never reproduce original meaning because we are constrained by our traditions, historically, linguistically socially and culturally. Hirsch, as cited in Palmer (1969) counters that "if it is held that the 'meaning' of a passage (in the sense of verbal meaning) can change then there is no fixed norm for judging whether the passage is being interpreted correctly" (p. 61). The response to this claim is that "understanding is not the understanding of language but the understanding through language" (ibid., p. 53).

Critical hermeneutics also makes a case for objectivity, however, the notion of reproduction in critical hermeneutics is very different because here it is maintained that objectivity can only be achieved by moving away from reproduction. Reproduction of meaning is perceived as "reproduction of traditional power structures and falls under the spell of false consciousness" (Gallagher, 1992, p. 241). It is only through recognition of the false consciousness that a 'reflective emancipation' interpreted as objectivity can be achieved. Emancipation is understood as a freedom from traditional authority structures and is the goal in critical hermeneutics (Gallagher, 1992, p. 245). Once again moderate hermeneutics argues that we can never be free from ideology because it is part of our being. It constitutes that part which allows us to engage not only the initial questions but all those which follow.

LEGITIMATION: VALIDITY ISSUES

Scott's (1990) admonition regarding interpretive methodologies in newspaper studies that "there is little positive indication of the criteria which should be used in assessing the validity of a particular researcher's interpretation" (p. 147) serves as a caution regarding the difficulty of establishing authenticity. Expressed differently but essentially addressing the same issue, Lather asks us to consider whether the researcher is engaged in scientific research or merely interpretive journalism in a qualitative/*critical* study (Lather, 1986). LeCompte & Priessle (1993) add that analysts in qualitative research can never be completely certain about the authenticity, credibility and validity of their results. It is obvious then that validity or legitimacy or authenticity concerns continue to challenge those engaged in qualitative research.

Lenzo's (1995) summary of validity issues in qualitative research, particularly those studies that address what Lather (1986) refers to as openly ideological research, draws attention to the challenge from poststructuralists regarding the relational aspects of language and the crisis of representation. Perhaps the question should not be, "Whose research is valid?" but rather, "What are the best measures for validating particular kinds of research?" Clearly, validity is a serious consideration in all qualitative research. The point of validity in qualitative research may be best measured perhaps, not in the efforts to confirm the findings, but rather, in the strength of the efforts to disconfirm the findings (Erickson, 1986).

In her discussion on the *Art and Politics of Interpretation*, Richardson (1998) identifies legitimation as one of four central concerns of all researchers. She points to the problem centred on "epistemology, including how a public text legitimates itself, or makes claim for its own authority" (p. 320). The common use of terms like validity, reliability and generalizability "that seek to anchor a texts authority" (ibid.) do not fit with the postmodern orientation. Schwandt (1998) suggests that ontological hermeneutics transcends issues of validity. Quoting Taylor (1971/1987) he points out that "there is no verification procedure we can fall back on. We can only continue to offer interpretations; we are in an interpretative circle" (ibid., p. 228).

DELIMITATIONS

I have limited the representation of curriculum-related issues to elementary and secondary schooling and I have limited the data collection to articles found in the Journal. This newspaper shares provincial coverage with the Calgary Herald which tends to cover more news in the southern part of the province than does the Journal.

With the exception of teacher education, which was included in the data representing the breadth of education, selection did not include reports that pertained to post secondary education. This study did not attempt to determine public perceptions of education or to analyze the intent of individual journalists.

The coverage reflected in this newspaper cannot be generalized to other newspapers or to other media but rather can be viewed in terms that highlight potential and possibility.

CHAPTER IV: CURRICULUM REPESENTATION IN THE JOURNAL, 1984-1994

INTRODUCTION

The data presented in this chapter illustrate both the breadth and depth of curriculum representation in the Journal during the decade 1984-1994. A brief synopsis of the scope of curriculum representation has been compiled. This synopsis provides a contextual framework for the issues which are explored in Chapter V through an examination of selected strands addressing Native Education, Special Needs Education and Private Education.

Quotes contained in this chapter reflect many voices. I have tried to associate each quote with a name or identification such as parent, teacher, consultant, advocacy group or government representative, etc. In places where that identification is absent the reader may assume that the quote represents Journal staff the number of whom, writing about schooling in Alberta, varied from year to year. In the school year 1984/85 for example, more than 62 journalists wrote about schooling in Alberta (see Appendices). This gives the reader some idea regarding the possible range of perspective among journalists. The use of quotes to support the text is primarily found in the data that represent the three strands which are the focal point of this chapter.

An overview of each strand throughout the decade of study serves to act as an entry point for the analysis which follows. It also sets a context for some of the curriculum issues which were presented in the newspaper articles and reports. The strands originate in an Alberta Government document, *The Final Report* (1984e) from the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding (for details see Chapters I & II).

Proposed revisions to the School Act (1985-1988) (and also the subject of much commentary in the Journal), mark a second meeting place for these three strands. Towards the end of the decade, the strands cross paths in a subsequent revision of the School Act, in 1992. Although I highlight issues in each strand that emerged during various stages of data analysis and point to the arguments attached to those issues, it is not within the goals of this dissertation to present a comprehensive analysis of each issue. The separate strands are loosely organized around one or more curriculum indicators. Although I have presented the data according to delivery, content and quality, the newspaper representations do not address each of the indicators equally. This is most obvious in the Native Education strand. The commentary offered in the introduction to that strand clarifies this observation for the reader. Prior to the summary, I have addressed how the issue of funding, within each strand, was represented in the Journal.

SCOPE OF CURRICULAR REPORTING

In general, the articles in the Journal and the articles in this collection can be categorized according to whether they were information or opinion pieces. Examples of the latter were found on the Editorial pages, in the Letters section and in the daily articles published by the education writer. Opinion pieces generally ranged in length from two paragraphs to five columns. Former Education writer Olive Elliott (1985-1990) provided many examples of both opinion and information articles and contributed more than 300 articles during this time period.

The following list illustrates topics that appeared consistently throughout the decade: wage negotiations, taxation, school grants, strikes, school closures/openings, school program profiles, teacher and principal profiles, awards, teacher/student suspensions, criminal charges, user fees, busing, contests, alternative schools, smoke free schools, schools as nuclear free zones, green schools, provincial testing and prayers in schools.

Although many topics garnered the spotlight for a brief period of time (e.g., Youth News Network (YNN), smoking ban in schools, textbook fees and year round schooling), others (e.g., Special Needs Education and funding), maintained a strong presence throughout the 10 years. Controversy was often partnered with longevity.

One example illustrating longevity was the controversy represented in the newspaper by the non-educable clause (2.9) in the proposed School Act (Bill 59). This

Bill was introduced in the legislature in the spring of 1987 (Journal,10/15/87; 11/02/87; 11/03/87; 11/04/87; 11/18/87; 11/21/87; 11/22/87), and the controversy was sustained over a number of years. A second example also associated with a government action and sustained over a number of years was the possibility of reducing or increasing funding for private schools (Journal, 03/27/85; 05/27/85; 06/11/85; 06/12/85; 11/09/85). The notion of controversy will be discussed further in Chapter V.

REPRESENTATION OF SUBJECTS

> What is essential for all children to learn? No need to answer in private. Grammar and history are essentials, of course-the very subjects which seem to have fallen by the wayside. Particular attention should be paid to mathematics, physics, geography, biology, chemistry, frequent physical exercise, the proper way to hammer nails, the way to build a diet on the four major food groups and the importance of always carrying Kleenex in your pocket (Journal, 08/1 1/92).

In this section I offer a snapshot of specific subjects that were represented on the pages of the Journal and in some cases and where indicated I have highlighted social dimensions related to those subjects. Due to the volume of articles represented in the Health section, I have indicated coverage by years rather than individual days.

Health

Changes to the health curriculum garnered more press than all the other subjects combined. By the mid-1980's, discussion about sex education in the schools had escalated to the point of controversy. Fueled by print and broadcast media reports of a widespread aids epidemic, private concerns became part of the public discourse in schooling. What began as a concern about the appropriateness of an optional component on human sexuality in the health curriculum at the high school level ended as a demand for mandatory sex education in all divisions.

Although much of the media attention was focused on sex education (Journal, 1985/86, 1986/87 1987/88, 1988/89, 1988/89) including abuse prevention (Journal, 1985/86, 1989/90), and Aids education (Journal, 1986/87, 1987/88, 1989/90), information about fire prevention programs (Journal, 1984/85), alcohol awareness and traffic safety (84/85), alcohol abuse (Journal, 1986/87), street safety (Journal, 1985/86), anti-smoking programs (Journal, 1986/87,88/89), handicapped persons awareness programs (Journal, 1986/87), suicide prevention (Journal, 1986/87), drug awareness programs (Journal, 1989/90), preventing date violence (Journal, 1990/91) and suicide prevention (Journal, 1986/87) were discussed and responded to in the pages of the Journal.

Mathematics

The juxtaposition of health and mathematics programs revealed a stark contrast. There was little written about mathematics until revisions to the school curriculum in 1992. Early in 1985/86 a series of articles about girls in mathematics and science, and the beginnings of gender issues in core subjects, appeared. Articles about gender research in math surfaced in 1989/90, along with articles which focused on teaching strategies such as exploring mathematical concepts through the use of manipulative materials. In 1991/92, shortly after *International Comparisons in Education* (Alberta Education, 1991) was released, there was an announcement in the Journal (01/92) that a new curriculum for math at the high school level would be in place for September 1992. The first national exam in mathematics was announced in 1992/93.

Language Arts

In the fall of 1987/88, there were over 30 articles in the Journal addressing issues of literacy. Related issues, scaffolding the literacy platform, appeared in subsequent months and included topics such as writing competence, reading scores, methodologies in language arts teaching, spelling instruction, national and international testing, validity issues in evaluation and assessment, and global competitiveness.

Periodically, the subject of book banning in schools surfaced in the pages of the Journal. Objections to particular books included not only those that had been specifically identified as hate literature and had been banned in other places (Journal, 10/06/86;10/07/86) but also those books thought to contain offensive representations of or attitudes towards particular groups of people (Journal, 02/13/89). The Journal also represented the views of individuals and groups who objected to what they considered a form of profanity in text materials. This is best exemplified by the furor created over passages contained in John Steinbeck's of *Mice and Men* (Journal, 03/03/94) or the Division One Impressions Reading Series (Journal, 04/12/92;04/13/92) which was said to have " too many chants, spells monster and witch stories and too many references to mystical cultures and rituals" and thus, according to the Parents for Quality Education, encouraged a belief in Satanism (Journal, 04/14/92).

Science

Articles about science education, evident early in 1984, were linked to a renewed emphasis on core school subjects. Premier Lougheed referred to this refocusing as the 'New Basics'. The 'New Basics' were closely tied to an industrial science strategy proposal which outlined economic strategies to encourage global competitiveness (Alberta, 1985a). As in previous times, education was firmly linked to the marketplace and over the decade in this study, that linkage to global competitiveness would surface as a dominant theme in education writing. Newspaper coverage of science education during the 10 year period addressed perceived problems in science education (Journal, 1984/85, 1985/86) and primarily focused on three areas; women in science (Journal, 12/05/84; 05/22/86; 10/22/86), changes to the secondary school program, and environmental concerns (recycling, energy awareness). Overriding all of these topics was a specific concern with science literacy (Journal, 03/05/90).

Social Studies

Articles related to the social studies curriculum were featured between 1984 and 1990. During this time there were major revisions to the high school curriculum to include more history, geography and politics. The influence of the *Final Report* (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e) was evident in provincial discussion papers which initiated a focus on tolerance and understanding with respect to race relations. Peace education and nuclear disarmament in the early 1980's was replaced with an emphasis on multiculturalism. The newspaper often reported news on student exchange programs, international school partnerships and travel study programs. Teachers received awards for innovative programs integrating multiculturalism into the social studies curriculum. In a process oriented approach to understanding the world, the focus was on problem solving and application.

In 1988, an article in the Journal reported that a multicultural Commission believed that Alberta Education needed to be more responsible about integrating multiculturalism into the curriculum. By the late 1980's, as concerns about racism in schools appeared more frequently in schools, a discussion about intercultural education vs. multicultural education emerged. Articles reflecting a resurgence of nationalism in the schools paralleled the rise in multicultural interests and were manifested in concerns about Canadian history and Canadian textbooks.

It is evident from the social studies curriculum and from the historical overviews offered in Chapter II that issues related to Native Education, Private Education and Special Needs Education, particularly those associated with tolerance, had been percolating for some time. Some of these issues found their voice in the *Final Report* (Committee On Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e) and subsequently in the Journal.

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

As outlined in Chapter II, there had been an historical pattern of inadequate support in the public school system for children with Special Needs and special mention of this was made in the *Final Report*. The final document recognized both the role that private institutions played in meeting those needs and the Alberta Government's efforts in promoting school board initiatives to support the integration of exceptional children in public schools (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e, pp. 60-67).

The way in which Special Needs Education is defined must take into consideration the context from which it emerges, the conceptual understanding of the user and the particular time (historically) in which it is used. Within the framework of this dissertation, Special Needs Education is used as a descriptor to mean the education of children who were labeled as deaf, hearing impaired, dependent handicapped, autistic, gifted, multiply handicapped, learning disabled, mentally handicapped, behaviour disordered and ESL. These referents have been selected because they formed the list of descriptors which appeared in the Journal during the time period addressed in this study. In the later years of the decade, the term exceptional children was also used to refer to those children requiring special education services. While it is understood that some of the descriptors mentioned above are open to multiple interpretations and may have generated controversy in their usage, it is not within the scope of this research to follow that line of inquiry.

The largest concentration of articles found in the archival collection appeared in the 1987/88 school year. Male voices outnumbered female voices throughout the 10 years (see Appendix A), and teachers and student voices were least represented. The articles are dominated by concerns about the delivery of Special Needs Education. I have organized the articles that address delivery according to needs, rights, options and government intervention. Content and quality are briefly addressed, followed by a section on funding.

Delivery

Needs

The integration of students with mental and physical disabilities into mainstream classrooms, and the challenging conditions their presence sometimes created in these classrooms, was a major theme between 1990 and 1994. "Active discrimination by school boards toward children with disabilities is a contradiction of their responsibility to develop citizens who believe all people are valued" (Journal, 10/14/90). Students with severe behaviour disorders were often singled out as particularly challenging: "Of all the pressures on today's schools, few are more difficult to deal with than the requirement that schools accommodate children with behaviour problems" (Journal, 03/05/90). In a discussion about increased funding to meet the increased demands of special needs students, one reporter commented that "behaviour disordered children are often angry, frustrated and lack the skills needed to cope in a traditional classroom

(Journal, 05/06/91). Later in the same year, concern was expressed regarding "the increasing number of children who are showing up in schools with severe behaviour disorders" and who "are basically out of control, who run around the classroom screaming and yelling" (Journal, 09/03/91). Readers learned that "some Edmonton parents are starting to pull their children out of the public schools because of the integration of special needs students" (Journal, 04/21/93).

Periodically, the Journal profiled individual families who were represented as being in conflict with a local Board or the Department of Education over the placement of their children. It was not uncommon for the representation of these conflicts to be spaced over a period of days with letters from readers providing the fuel to keep the interest alive (Journal, 01/03/88; 10/14/90; 10/25/90; 01/91; 04/13/91; 04/15/91; 03/24/92; 09/13/92; 10/18/93; 01/26/94).

Rights

Section 2.9 of Bill 59 raised the question of who was legally entitled to an education in Alberta. Much of the newspaper text generated during this period incorporated the discourse of advocacy groups such as Dialog with Disabled Persons: "Alberta has established itself as a leader - worldwide - in providing quality special education services to students with special needs. I do not believe Albertans would support this type of legislation suggested in Bill 59 if they saw the long term implications" (Journal, 11/18/87). Bruce Uditsky, the parent of a disabled child and the Edmonton Director of the Association for Community Living argued that Bill 59 was "archaic and misguided in its intent" (Journal, 10/15/87). Others, like Olive Elliott (the Journal's Education writer), countered that "special treatment for the disadvantaged group is not mandatory" and that "school districts and governments are not required by section 15 to go to great lengths to provide education for every child" (Journal, 12/02/87). Her sentiments are captured in the following quote which appeared two years after the initial comments:

> Schools aren't treatment facilities for the mentally ill or the emotionally disturbed. That never was and never should be their role. They are in the

> business of providing an education to children who are capable of benefiting from instruction - and, as governments are given to piously pointing out, that is one of the most important jobs that exists today. It requires undivided attention and undiluted funding (Journal, 01/18/89).

Both opponents and supporters of the non-educable clause used the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to support their position. Supporters, like Elliott, argued that all rights including those in education are qualified (Journal, 12/02/87). "The charter places that limitation on the rights of the minority because it recognizes the exorbitant costs of providing instruction to only a few children" (Journal,11/04/87). Underpinning this argument was an assumption that the rights of the majority were being threatened. This argument posited that in the process of rushing to enshrine the rights of exceptional children, the rights of 'regular' children were being jeopardized: "The groups and individuals who advocate integration of all mentally disabled adults and children into the community will not admit that there might be problems with their solution" (Journal, 11/29/89).

Those who argued for the right for all children to be schooled, regardless of the severity of their disability included parents, university professors such as Dick Sobsey and advocacy groups like the Alberta Association for Community Living. Their argument incorporated concerns regarding the possibility of abuse should rights not be protected by law. Critics were also fearful that children with lesser disabilities could be moved to the top of the exclusion list. Some parents argued the case for "all children to have access to a fully integrated education as a right - through provincial legislation or government policy - instead of being left at the mercy of individual school districts" (Journal, 01/03/88). Commenting on the redrafting of Bill 59, an education professor suggested that a new Bill "will recognize that some students with intensive needs may be difficult to place but it will focus on development and identification of appropriate educational programs, not on exclusion from programs (Journal, 01/31/88).

Eventually the offending clause was amended and the new School Act became law in January of 1989. It was, as Dick Sobsey (an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta) pointed out "...that our new School Act provides the right to education for every child regardless of disability" (Journal, 02/03/89). The issue of who had the right to a fully funded education was soon replaced by controversies regarding the provision of programs for students with special needs. The concept of place figured prominently in this discussion.

Funding for special needs programming had been problematic since the early 1980's. Paralleling a larger social movement towards de-institutionalization, parents and advocacy groups (like the Canadian Association for Community Living) pushed to secure programs in publicly funded schools (Journal, 12/01/87;10/14/90). Those demands included placement in regular classrooms regardless of the nature of the disability. In some cases, total integration was viewed as the only democratic solution (Journal, 04/26/87; 05/08/87). A parent advocate for the severe and multiple handicapped voiced a concern of many of the advocacy groups when she commented that "governments and school districts have to put more money and commitment into providing integrated education for children with diverse abilities and needs" (Journal, 05/08/87).

In the early to mid 1980's, the Department of Social Services in Alberta was eager to comply with public demands to move away from institutional care. Advocacy groups such as the Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded were "opposed to any plans to preserve or build institutions for persons with a handicap of any degree or type"(Journal, 11/06/87). Later, in what could be interpreted as a politically astute move, the Department of Social Services, responding to the move to de-institutionalize, was able to save millions of dollars and appear socially responsible at the same time. Olive Elliott noted, however, that the advocacy groups who insisted children be removed from institutions and placed in publicly funded schools "managed to overlook the vital other half of the equation - funding", consequently jeopardizing the provision of programs and services (Journal,11/06/87). Reports in the Journal suggested that money saved through the elimination of institutional programs was not passed on to the Department of Education, which was now financially responsible for the children. Within a context of economic downsizing, Alberta Education passed those expenses on to the various School Boards (Journal, 11/06/87).

Options

Parents, concerned for the welfare of their own children, needed to understand how services would be provided and who would fund those services. The Journal articles revealed a possibility of three choices. Some parents preferred that their children be placed in regular programs, suggesting that "children with severe disabilities become more independent in the school system" (Journal, 11/18/87), while others felt their children should attend private institutions (Journal, 09/21/87; 09/23/87; 11/10/87; 03/24/92). A third choice was to continue providing special programs within public school systems. The position represented in the Journal indicated that a number of parents believed the decision of placement should be left up to them and that the costs should be picked up by the individual Boards. In essence, many were arguing that all children, regardless of ability, had a right to a publicly funded quality education.

Placing children with severe mental and physical handicaps in regular classrooms led to other problems such as how to provide appropriate care: "Legal opinion states that the Board (Edmonton Public School Board) cannot refuse admittance to resident students on the grounds that it cannot provide appropriate health services" (Journal, 05/1989). Children who were deemed medically fragile and required specialized services such as catheterization, tube feeding or postural drainage presented unique challenges in the classroom. There was also the question of legal and financial responsibility for providing auxiliary services such as counseling, physical restraint and behavioral therapy for children whose emotional needs exceeded the skills required by standard classroom teachers.

Some Boards pointed out that these services were the responsibility of the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services and appealed to the public to remember that the responsibility of the Board was "to provide educational services" and not, as had happened in recent years, to "take on aspects of a mandate that belongs elsewhere" (Journal, 02/23/91). One teacher cautioned that "integration policies should be grounded in a theoretical base" and "determined by pedagogical principles, not political agendas (Journal, 04/03/93).

The issue of safety for students and staff was also a concern when considering the move to integrate. Some parents, it was reported, were very concerned with the effect that integration of severely handicapped and seriously disturbed children "could have on the learning opportunities and safety of the other children" (Journal, 02/05/90). The Edmonton Public School Board prepared several reports regarding the difficulties accommodating students with behaviour disorders. In the case of children with severe behavioral problems, the question of auxiliary services was also raised (Journal, 01/20/89). Elliot (Journal, 12/19/89) argued that, although Boards are responsible for the education of all students, they should not be responsible for physical constraint, behavioral therapy and psychological counseling.

Elliott also suggested putting "severely behaviour disordered students in a treatment facility while others with behaviour problems might be best served by day programs at non-resident centres" (Journal, 01/20/89). She implied that if the government were genuinely interested in the education of behaviour disordered students, they would consider some of these possibilities. Those in opposition deemed it "shocking to find such a perspective still being argued seriously" (Journal, 2/22/89) at the end of the 20th century and criticized Elliott in particular for suggesting that "nobody knows for sure whether the integration of students with disabilities into regular classrooms is a good idea" (Journal, 12/19/89).

During the 1980's, Elliott and other colleagues wrote informative articles about the unique programs offered for Special Needs students, including severely handicapped, at Crystal Park School in Grande Prairie (Journal, 11/23/84; 04/30/87). They commented on the fact that programs within the school were selected on the basis of what was best for the students. Some children, it was pointed out, were integrated fully into regular classes with or without aides while others were integrated part time or placed in segregated classrooms full time. If this model was seen by Elliott and others as a successful alternative to existing programs for severely physically handicapped children, it is puzzling that similar support did not appear to be encouraged for behaviour disordered students.

Government Intervention

As I mentioned in the introduction, concern with the delivery of Special Needs programming gained momentum during the latter half of the 1980's when the Minister of Education introduced a revision of the School Act (Bill 59) in 1987. The newspaper devoted several columns to a discussion of the proposed legislation at that time and throughout the beginning months of 1988. One dimension of this discussion focused on Section 2.9 which contained the controversial non-educable clause. This clause generated more press than any other aspect of the new Bill (Journal, 10/15/87; 11/02/87; 11/04/87; 11/18/87; 11/21/87; 11/27/87; 12/17/87; 01/03/88; 02/08/88; 04/11/88).

In 1992, the Minister of Education suggested that by the end of the year the province hoped "to have a policy for integrating special needs students into the classroom" (Journal, 11/14/92).

Content and Quality

The dimensions of content and quality of curriculum for Special Needs programs were rarely addressed in the articles concerning Special Needs Education. The data illustrate that in this strand the primary focus was on the delivery of curriculum, accompanied by attention to the funding of such delivery.

Funding

More than one Journal reader commented on the tension between economic realities and humanitarian considerations: "At the first sign of a Depression money is taken away from the people who burden society and are believed to useless" (Journal, 12/17/87). On another occasion the President of the Learning Disabilities Association of Edmonton commented that former Education Minister Dave King "took this money away from parents and turned it over in block sums to school districts" (Journal, 10/10/87).

The introduction of block funding, whereby monies were assigned to school Boards on a per resident pupil basis by the Alberta government in the early 1980's, opened up a public discussion regarding the viability of providing specific programs to students with special needs (Journal, 05/19/87). Depending on the particular circumstances, the new funding structure either increased or decreased funding for students with special needs. According to the President of the Learning Disabilities Association "districts received funding whether or not they provided appropriate programs for special needs children" (Journal, 10/10/87). Funding decisions became the responsibility of the school Boards and per resident pupil funding became the centerpiece of controversy. Articles expressing concerns about a reduction in services (Journal 11/28/85), elimination of programs (Journal, 12/15/85) and the possibility of tuition fees invited public response (Journal, 02/29/87).

Although the newspaper published articles announcing the increase in funding for Special Needs programs (Journal,11/06/85; 11/28/85), the change in structure of the funding formula essentially decreased the overall funding for some of the larger Boards who had been providing programs for students with a variety of handicaps (Journal,11/28/85; 12/05/85; 01/13/86; 01/15/86; 02/05/86). Prior to this announcement, it was possible to secure additional funding on a program basis through a practice known as 'grandfathering'. This practice allowed some of the larger Boards, like Edmonton Public, to provide much needed but costly programs, supporting multiply handicapped students. The new funding structure, which essentially eliminated special grants for Special Needs programs, established a set amount per pupil above the standard per pupil grant. Although this money was targeted for the programming for exceptional children, ultimately it was up to individual Boards to decide how that extra funding was to be used. One reader tapping into the potential for abuse suggested that not only should both Boards receive an equitable share of the funding "but they must agree to be accountable for how the money is used" (Journal, 10/10/87).

Controversy developed over the allocation of additional funds being based on a per resident pupil basis. In particular, this caused problems between the Public and the Catholic School Boards in Edmonton and moved one Journal writer to comment that "Separate schools must either serve their resident pupils - and only their resident pupils - or if they want to compete with public schools, they can't expect privileges based on an exclusivity that no longer exists" (Journal,10/05/87). The public Board found themselves in the position of having to provide services to students for whom they were not receiving any money and, in some cases, this amount exceeded $25 000 per student. According to the reports in the Journal, each Board received funding for students who were not attending its school district (Journal, 09/26/87; 10/04/87; 10/05/87;11/19/87).

In one instance at least, the new funding structure caused one of the larger Boards to conclude that, in order to manage financially, their only choice was to reduce funding for existing programs for Special Needs students (Journal, 02/05/87; 05/13/87; 05/15/87). This translated into a reduction of services, staff and placements, or an elimination of programs altogether (Journal, 05/29/87). In what was represented in the newspaper as a desperate move to protect existing services, this same Board proposed the idea of tuition for non resident students requiring Special Education programs (Journal, 02/29/87). According to the Board's Superintendent, the system forced the Board "to charge a fee for all mentally and physically handicapped Catholic students attending high cost programs in the district" (Journal, 09/26/87). Unpalatable to all those involved, which included parents, the Boards and their staffs, this suggestion only exacerbated the problem (Journal, 05/23/87; 05/27/78; 09/26/87; 10/05/87).

By 1993, the discussion regarding the delivery of education to children with special needs was reshaped to meet a new economic reality and the very different priorities of a newly formed government. Those priorities included balancing the books and reducing the deficit through unprecedented cutbacks to education and healthcare.

Summary

Between 1984-1994, two major issues addressing the delivery of education, both concerned with rights, dominated the discussion in Special Needs Education. The first issue focused on the question of who was entitled to a fully funded education. Public discussion of this issue followed the controversy ignited by Section 2.9 of Bill 59 (1987). The assumption that all children had the right to a basic education was made unequivocal in the *Final Report* (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding 1984e pp.18, 54, 60). In the political domain, reaching a common understanding of the term "all children" proved somewhat more challenging. The proposition that all children had the right to a basic education rested on a belief that all children had the capacity for education. This point represented the core of the dispute for those who challenged Section 2.9 of the new School Act. The second issue concerned placement. Questions regarding the inclusion and exclusion of children with special needs within the frame of regular programming generated heated debate in the newspaper.

Newspaper reporting on special education concerns pointed to issues that were specific to the delivery of curriculum. If Special Needs programming was to be provided, who was allowed access to those resources? Who was not? Between 1984 and 1994, significant changes in the programming and funding for students with Special Needs occurred in Alberta. The newspaper highlighted some of those changes and pointed to a subtle shift in public attitude. In Chapter V, I link these changes to a discussion of the political text of curriculum.

PRIVATE EDUCATION

Traditionally, private schooling referred to schooling whose primary source of funding did not come from the public purse. Typically, private schools did not have access to a tax base and were usually governed by a Board that was not required by law to hold public elections. In Alberta, like the rest of Canada, private schools met the needs of a relatively small percentage of the school population.

Private schooling, in this study, refers to religious schools, language schools, schools that address a variety of special needs, home schools, and charter schools. Although charter schools (first introduced in Alberta in 1994) may operate under the auspices of a local school district, in some respects, they function in ways similar to traditional private schools. Charter schools do not accept all students; only those who meet specific entrance requirements of the programs offered at these schools.

When The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding supervised a curriculum review throughout Alberta in 1983 and participated in the work of the Curriculum Audit Committee, it learned that curriculum materials used in the private system, while approved by the government, had never been evaluated. This discovery led to a curriculum audit of the core materials used in private schools and in particular those used in the private religious schools. Subsequent to the Education Department's review of materials, an independent firm from Edmonton (Woods Gordon Management Consultants) was hired to review curriculum materials in the Independent schools (Journal, 03/12/85). The findings of the two reviews were noted: "Both reports concluded that private schools should be required to meet minimum standards in the province, use programs that promote tolerance and hire qualified teachers" (Journal, 03/13/85). The school year 1984 /85 was also significant for private schools because of the suggestions contained in *Partners in Education* (Alberta, 1985b). Controversy over those suggestions was the subject of much of the media coverage on Private Education in subsequent years.

Delivery

In its representation of curricular issues concerning private schools, the Journal attended to debates about the delivery of school programs, focusing on the need for restructuring these schools, the rights of parents to choose curriculum and the possible options.

Needs

Province-wide investigation into the state of education in Alberta revealed serious shortcomings among some of the schools in the Private Education system and established the need to restructure the guidelines for the delivery of curriculum in private schools. Concerns about a curriculum "which is administered to students carrelled in egg-crate-like, plywood "offices", as a quasi-correspondence course, often by uneducated, uncertified teachers…" raised questions about the delivery of education in the lesser known church schools" (Journal, 09/16/84). This style of delivering curriculum whereby students completed a unit of study on their own and then moved on to complete another level was a type of programmed learning. Even though programmed learning was not unknown in Alberta, due to the popularity of correspondence courses, critics pointed to limitations at the elementary and high school levels. Students with a variety of disabilities could not be accommodated in this model. Lastly, the model was not conducive to the development of vital social skills. Since the children were for the most part isolated from their peers and since these schools could only accommodate a few students, the possibility of developing important social skills through the social activity of team sports was non-existent.

The need for restructuring was considered as serious enough to encourage R.N. Friedland (the former director of the Alberta Human Rights Commission) to write that "more than 150 fundamentalist church basement schools have sprung up in Alberta like so many toxic fungi after a warm rain" (Journal, 09/16/84). Recommendations contained in the *Final Report* (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e) suggested that "one category of private schools be recognized by the province of Alberta" (ibid., p.115; Journal, 02/09/85). This category would require certified teachers and would qualify schools for "financing of 75% of the School Foundation Program" (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e, p.115). This recommendation was strongly supported and incorporated in *Proposals for Amending the School Act* (Alberta Education, 1985b). The discussion paper suggested abandoning the existing four categories of private schools. Schools would be classified only as approved or unapproved: "Only approved schools would be eligible to receive a per pupil grant" (Journal, 01/17/85) while unapproved schools would be required to shut down. The lengthy discussion which ensued raised questions about the need to explore possibilities for other ways of delivering Private Education.

Rights

Parents and pastors supporting the existence of category four schools (uncertified teachers, unapproved curriculum) challenged the government position on the grounds of freedom and the right to religious belief. They felt that they needed to ensure "parental control of our children's education" (Journal, 09/13/84) and that to do otherwise would be "going against the word of God" (ibid). Children, they argued "are given to the parents not the state" (Journal, 01/26/85). This position was countered with the response reflected in a Letter to the Editor: "The idea that parents have the right to do whatever they want with their children is an 18th century idea" (Journal, 03/13/85). Some private schools supported the government position, commenting that the "bible tells us to respect those in authority" (Journal, 09/13/84). Others, such as Stockwell Day, the Treasurer of the Alberta Association for Independent Schools, criticized the report from the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding and the government's proposed principles for a new School Act as "totalitarianism"(Journal, 02/09/85).

The government promoted the belief in the public's right to choose how they would like schooling delivered to children. The choice in Alberta was between public and private schooling. Not only did the government support the continued existence of private schools, but it also favoured increased financial support for private schools on the grounds that "supermarket-style competition would be good for the school system" (Journal, 01/17/85). However, throughout the decade there were groups or individuals who questioned the right of private schools to exist at all. Ray Martin, an MLA arguing against the government's discussion paper, maintained it was "a blueprint for the deterioration and fragmentation of the public school system in the province" (Journal, 01/17/85).

In provincial submissions regarding the revision of the School Act, the Edmonton Public School Board argued that the right of parents to educate their children was not absolute or universal but that parental rights must be balanced by those of the children and the rest of society (Journal, 11/04/84). One reader challenging this position argued that "Canadian educational history has too many examples where the majority tried to override the minority's right to an education of their choice" (Journal, 12/09/84). Elsewhere (*Final Report*), the right to choose was articulated as "a parent's right in a democratic pluralistic society" (Journal, 01/20/88). Shifting the focus from the parents' rights, a Journal editor observed "there can be no doubt that children's right to a minimum education must take precedence" (Journal, 09/13/84).

Others thought the fear of private schools was an over reaction; that in fact "Bill 59 does not acknowledge a right to establish private schools" (Journal, 01/20/88) and "if private schools become a real threat, it's because the students have been driven away from the public schools" (Journal, 02/07/88).

Options

Charter schools, a phenomenon one journalist described as "blossoming all over the United States and Canada" (Journal, 03/06/94), were first introduced as a possibility in Alberta at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century. The Education Minister predicted that "Alberta education will have to wake up to public concerns or risk losing students to privately funded schools" or "folks will say we're just going to go somewhere and buy our educational services, we'll go beyond the publicly funded system and deliver it ourselves" (Journal, 03/10 92). His comments foreshadowed things to come.

During the school year 1993/94, there were more than 20 articles on charter schools in the archival collection, all of which appeared between January and June of 1994. These articles followed an announcement by the provincial government to introduce legislation allowing the establishment of charter schools which "aimed at using innovative ways to improve teaching and student learning" (Journal, 01/20/94). Since the concept of charter schools was new to Alberta, American examples were often used to explicate the concept of charter schools (Journal, 01/20/94; 02/07/94; 02/09/94; 03/27/94).

Dr. Joe Friedman (an Alberta radiologist who was an advocate of charter schools in Alberta and who occasionally wrote about charter schools for the newspaper) was often quoted in articles about charter schools (Journal, 01/20/94; 02/07/94; 02/09/94; 03/06/94). In one article, alluding to economic links, Friedman commented that "There is an increasing perception (in Canada) that academic outcomes are slipping, that standards don't match those of our greatest competitors and that some reorganization of the public system should occur" (Journal, 01/02/94).

Although the government stated that "the whole concept of charter schools is that they are not private" (Journal, 02/11/94), those opposing the implementation of charter schools thought otherwise. Speaking for the Alberta Teachers' Association, Julius Buski (Executive Secretary) commented that "Charter schools are the thin edge of the wedge for privatizing education" (Journal, 02/25/94). In an Editorial, the Journal commented:

> Charter schools should be tested and monitored carefully, in a pilot project under the following conditions: They should accept their fair share of children with mental and physical disabilities, and behaviour disorders; they should be forbidden from charging tuition or extra fees; they should operate with certified teachers; and they should be open to all children who apply under certain conditions (Journal, 02/09/94).

Another alternative to public schooling which was in place long before the concept of charter schools was home-schooling. The comments of one parent captured the sentiments of many home school supporters when she said "if we want our children to be autonomous and independent then home-schooling or 'de-schooling' represents a worthy means to that end" (Journal, 11/23/87). In a Letter to the Editor, one reader recognized that although home-schooling was not the answer for everyone, "many home-schoolers find it a compelling way to work towards learner-centered pedagogy" (Journal, 02/08/90). Olive Elliott commented that some parents chose home-schooling because "they want certain values taught" (Journal, 01/24/90). She also hinted that some parents "believed the schools were failing in their primary objective - teaching essential skills and knowledge" (ibid.).

Government Intervention

Schools that did not comply with the new regulations were challenged in court by the government. The government cited Constitutional Law (1867, 1982), the Alberta Act and the School Act to support their contention, while the errant private schools cited another authority: "The private school supporters call on an equally important constitutional right - freedom of conscience and religion - and a law written not by Parliament but by God" (Journal, 10/26/85). They were referring to the Book of Deuteronomy. A member of the Prairie Bible Institute proffered that "God ordained parents to teach their children before he ordained teachers or the government" (Journal, 01/26/85). The conflict was represented in the newspaper as one between Church and State.

The proposed changes to the School Act incorporated changes to existing private schools and considered the circumstances of home-schooling: "Concern has been expressed about the adequacy of teaching, the lack of variety in instructional resources and the physical facilities at home..." (Journal, 11/13/87). The new changes proposed "ongoing monitoring and supervision of students' progress" (ibid.). Not everyone supported those changes however. In a Letter to the Editor a disgruntled reader, citing research in support of home-schooling and against government interference, observed that she had "searched the newspapers in vain for coverage" about home-schooling and wanted to know why there "has been no coverage and certainly no informed fair coverage of a matter that is vitally important to the future of our nation" (Journal, 05/31/88).

Content and Quality

Although 'quality education' was a much used descriptor in the context of private schooling, it was never actually defined in the newspaper. A member representing the Alberta Association of Independent Schools, believing in high caliber of schooling offered at the church schools, suggested that "schools should have free rein to teach whatever they want" (Journal, 02/09/85). The Journal presented the position of the Alberta Department of Education that all children had a right to a quality education and in the event that parents abdicated that responsibility, the province had a "constitutional responsibility" to ensure that right (Journal, 03/01/85). One government researcher commented on the "poor curriculum, bigoted teaching and inadequate facilities" in private schools which left students unprepared for provincial exams (Journal, 03/12/85).

Information presented in another article suggested that the government wanted schools regularized in their relationship with the government (Journal, 09/04/84). The government, according to the Journal, recognized the difficulty in securing regularization unless all schools were under the same umbrella. Quality education was reshaped in the newspaper text to refer to a 'basic education'. An editorial in September of 1984 used the term "minimum education" in a discussion about children's rights and quality education (Journal, 09/13/84). Education columnist Olive Elliott later challenged the equation of minimum education with quality education (Journal, 11/21/88).

The curriculum review that generated the most controversy was that of the Accelerated Christian Education program, a Texas-produced curriculum which according to its detractors was anti-intellectual, anti-scientific and racist. In the mid-1980's the Vice President of the Fundamental Christian Schools identified biblical teaching as the focus of content and accused Alberta Education of "trying to make children learn "atheistic and immoral teachings" (Journal, 09/02/84). He argued "that education without God, such as children are likely to get in a secular public school system, implies that one need not know about God to know about the world" and "parents who deny their God-given responsibility to teach consistent moral values at home and school are raising their children like potatoes" (Journal, 01/26/85). The sex education program in the public system was represented by one Pastor as "an immoral, humanist perspective which is at odds with Christian belief" (Journal, 01/26/85).

Although this tiny group of Christian Fundamentalist schools represented a minority of private schools, they received the majority of press coverage in the early years of the decade in this study. The Alberta government and the Association of Independent Schools were represented as having differing opinions about what constituted a quality education.

Prior to the revision of the School Act, teachers in category IV schools did not require certification (Journal, 09/13/84; 02/09/85). These schools came under the jurisdiction of the Association of Independent Schools. Those using the programmed learning model argued that since the texts do the teaching, a highly trained teacher was not necessary. Schools who did not employ certified teachers were prohibited from issuing high school credits.

The Journal established its position on the matter when commentary was published in an editorial regarding the province's responsibility with respect to a quality education. Despite the nod to freedom and the right to religious belief, the Editors proclaimed the "right of all children to receive an education that meets minimum standards" (Journal, 09/13/84). Some argued that a quality education was being sacrificed to morals education. Comments on two reports commissioned by the government (Woods Gordon Management Consultants, 1984: Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e), were attributed to the Education Minister: "too many private schools offer shallow, substandard education that can no longer be tolerated (Journal, 03/12/85).

Opposition to the government position was represented in the Journal by a number of the pastors and parents of the church schools, who argued that the high school credit system was not the only way to educate a child and that, in a diverse society with diverse needs, alternatives should be acceptable. They also suggested that the initiative to promote tolerance and understanding among Alberta's school children was not genuine because it did not include tolerance and understanding of differing religious values.

Funding

Private schools in Alberta have received public money since the 1960's. Initially funding was based on a per pupil grant but later changed to a percentage of the per pupil grant allotted to the public system. The grant was $100.00 per pupil in 1967, and had increased to $1400.00 by 1984. Government funding of private schools was described in the *Final Report* (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, 1984e) as "being the most generous of any province in Canada" (Journal, 02/07/88).

During the first six years of the decade in this study, newspaper coverage of funding issues was dominated by discourse which questioned the wisdom and rationale for funding of private schools. Largely this opposition was in response to the suggestions contained in the proposal for a new School Act. One large urban Board prepared a brief for the government recommending that the "Minister of Education deny public tax revenues to certain categories of private schools and outlaw others completely" (Journal, 12/09/84). Others feared that increased financial support for private schools was essentially a move towards the voucher system which "would see provincial grants following students to schools they choose to attend" (Journal, 01/17/85). By the spring of 1985, opposition to increased public funding for private schools was becoming more intense as various group organized to voice their concerns. A group of eight urban school boards suggested that "The government should correct earlier errors and deny funding to private schools unless they adhere to the Department of Education's curriculum, hire only certified teachers and do not restrict entry because of religion, behaviour or academic standing" (Journal, 05/27/85).

A Journal Editorial maintained the right of private schools to exist but drew the line at monetary support, suggesting that funding for private schools, could "cripple" the public system and that "When we argue against public funding of private schools we are not merely concerned that the money could be better spent in the public system. We are fighting to maintain the separation of church and state which is fundamental to a pluralist society" (Journal, 06/12/85).

Summary

The image of Private Education constructed on the pages of the Journal in the 1980's was unlike the popular image of elite private schools which were populated by economically advantaged students dressed in smart uniforms. Instead, much attention was given to private church schools which were housed in church basements. Newspaper representation focused on the lack of appropriate curricular materials and the use of teaching strategies that challenged current thinking about teaching and learning. In the middle years of the decade, information about private schools was sparse. Towards the end of the decade, articles about the positive aspects of private schools began to emerge. This trend was illustrated by special feature articles and by a positive orientation of articles to charter schools.

At the beginning of the decade, controversy about Private Education centered around three issues; funding (Journal, 12/09/84; 03/03/85; 05/27/85; 06/08/85;

06/11/85; 06/13/85; 03/01/86; 06/09/88; 06/19/88; 01/19/91; 01/19/92; 03/05/94), delivery of education and the content of curriculum. A minority of fundamentalist Christian schools challenged the right of the government to interfere in the schooling process. Their argument rested on a belief that parents ultimately had the right to make decisions about schooling and that included decisions about the way that curriculum was delivered and the appropriateness of the content. Critics attacked the integrity and quality of that education.

By the end of the decade, Private Education issues centered around concerns regarding home-schooling and charter schools as alternative choices to public school. Support appeared to lean toward charter schools and home-schooling as they were represented in the newspaper as being of superior curricular quality.

Concerns regarding funding permeated the discourse throughout the period. Although funding of private schools was initially represented as taking away from the public system, by 1993/94 private schools in Alberta were receiving more funding from the public purse than private schools in any other province in Canada. Funding for private schools was also represented as fostering religious, racial and economic elitism. As charter schools gained prestige, this representation changed to one of adding to the public system and encouraging choice.

NATIVE EDUCATION

Contemporary practice is to refer Canadian Indigenous people as First Nations or Aboriginal. This terminology was noticeably absent from the newspaper lexicon of 1984-1994. Instead, First Nations were referred to as 'Indians', 'our Indians', 'Natives' or 'Indigenous People'. In this dissertation, I have chosen to use the term Native to refer to Indian, Metis, Inuit and all other indigenous people in Canada because this term appears most commonly in the newspaper reports.

The tone of the newspaper articles in the first half of the decade is set by the opening comment in the *Final Report* (Committee on Tolerance and Understanding 1984e) that: "The general state of native education in Alberta is deplorable" (p. 116).

The comment was repeated in articles throughout the year following the release of the report (Journal, 12/01/84; 12/10/84) and three years later was repeated in an article highlighting the findings of a series of Native Education studies commissioned by the Alberta government since the 1970's (Journal, 01/12/87).

Native Education received the most coverage in the newspaper from 1984-1988, with the years 1987 and 1988 being significant for Native communities across Canada, in terms of media attention. In Alberta for example, beginning in January of 1987, the Journal published a series of articles on the status of Native Education. The series occurred in the same year as Jonathan Manthorpe's Canada-wide examination of the Native revolution. The following year Edmonton hosted the first education conference jointly organized by Native and non-Native groups (Journal, 13/17/88). This was also the same year that a six million dollar study on Native Education for the Assembly of First Nations was published (Journal, 05/30/88). Throughout the 10 years in this study, male voices outnumbered female voices by a ratio of 3:1 (see Appendix C).

Delivery

The delivery of curriculum in federally funded First Nations schools was represented in Journal articles and Editorials. The delivery of curriculum was also represented in the attention given to the needs, rights options and government intervention. Social problems and concerns about the democratic distribution of human, textual and financial resources were common themes in the articles about Native Education. Among the social problems, it appeared that violence related to substance abuse was a constant presence throughout the ten years.

Needs

The needs of curriculum delivery included the quality of teachers teaching Native students and the challenges associated with schooling when attendance and social problems dominated the schooling landscape. The needs in this section are presented under the sub-categories of *Teachers, Attendance* and *Violence*.

Teachers Some of the articles (Journal, 10/26/84; 09/12/85; 03/19/88) were constituted by commentary from journalists and Native leaders which related to the quality of non-Native teachers who "because they couldn't get a job anywhere else, came to work for the Indians" (Journal, 09/12/85). Shortcomings in teacher knowledge and expertise were expressed: "You should have seen some of the lousy teachers we had" (ibid.). Equally conspicuous were observations about the harmful effects of negative teacher attitudes: "Poorly motivated teachers who are unable to recognize cultural differences kill the spirit of many native children…" (Journal, 03/19/88). The inability to see beyond traditional stereotypes was identified as a formidable obstacle to the delivery of quality programming. One journalist directed cynical comments towards teachers of Native students who were unable "to commit themselves to change and improvement" (Journal,10/26/84), adding more criticism to those responsible for delivering curriculum to Native students. The difficulty in teaching about Native cultures for non-Native teachers was not only a lack of general knowledge but a lack of resources.

The Native community lamented the paucity of Native teachers: "In comparison with other provinces, Alberta has been slow or has not developed a native education policy, curriculum resources and teacher training programs" (Journal, 06/12/85). In rare cases where Native teachers were available, they did not always want to work off the reserve because "they don't pay taxes when they live and work on the reserve (Journal, 11/25/87).

Attendance Poor attendance was cited as one of the many challenges inherent in Native Education: "In plain language, what this means is that Indian children, even those who remain enrolled in school, often don't show up for classes" (Journal, (26/11/84). Poor attendance combined with a high dropout rate was deemed significant enough to be mentioned repeatedly in articles about Native Education (Journal, 10/26/84; 10/26/84; 06/12/85; 05/29/86; 06/26/88). "Statistics show that aboriginal (sic) children dropout twice as often and at younger ages than non-aboriginal (sic) children" (Journal, 02/05/90).

Violence Violence against self and violence against others were common themes in articles about the schooling of Native children (Journal, 10/04/84; 10/10/84; 02/05/86; 02/06/86; 10/01/86; 01/11/94; 01/12/94; 04/25/94). Violence against self included cases of substance abuse as well as suicide. One Native leader, commenting on the extensive use of drugs and alcohol among Native students, observed that "the non-native population ignores the fact that alcohol and drug related suicides, murders and accidents claim a disproportionate number of native students" (Journal, 12/19/85). Violence against others included incidents of aggression such as fighting, directed towards other students. It also included acts of vandalism, sexual assault, and physical assault directed towards non-Native teachers.

Rights

Between 1984 and 1993, the demands for authority for Native schooling by aboriginal communities became increasingly insistent (Journal, 10/26/84; 12/01/84; 03/10/85; 12/85; 05/05/87; 09/29/87; 04/90; 09/93). The goal was to replace federal and provincial authorities with band authority since education for many Native students was contracted out by the federal government to the provincial governments: "Native people see education as a treaty right and think decisions about curriculum and delivery should be made by the Indian community" (Journal, 04/20/90). Others pointed to concerns relating to the lack of Native control: "How many treaty Indians sit on school Boards throughout Canada participating in planning and understanding the curriculum taught to our children?" (Journal, 03/10/85). Those who supported fully integrated programs in provincial schools sometimes balked at what they interpreted as exclusionary practices. This concern was captured by the comments of one Native parent who made the following observation:

> I've been involved (with native education) for 15 years and I have never received an invitation to be part of any research that's being done by the public school board or any papers that are being written on native education (Journal, 09/29/86).

Treaty Indians were not the only Native group to voice concerns about curriculum and schooling. The Metis Association of Alberta (MAA) was critical of the government for not allowing the Metis a voice in education (Journal, 06/12/85). The Assembly of First Nations also wanted the right to control curriculum. The role of government intervention to this end is discussed in the next section.

Options

Native Peoples did not always speak as one voice in their quest for control. Within Native communities there was conflict with respect to the various control issues. In some cases taking responsibility for schooling created "a lot of tension between parents who want to educate their children off reserve and those who want schools here" (Journal, 11/25/87). One example was the Hobbema Reserve's bid for a band high school in 1987. Some parents did not want their children educated on the reserve because they felt that the quality of education they received in the provincial public system was of a higher caliber, despite the racial conflicts and lack of schooling in Native culture (Journal, 05/05/87).

A response to the high drop-out rate among Northland students in the early 1980's inspired a team of investigators from Alberta Education to recommend

> that the Northland communities take control of the division, which was then run by a small, government appointed board and develop courses that would 'emphasize relevance in terms of self image, native language and culture, life skills and the practical and fine arts' (Journal, 02/26/93).

In Grand Prairie a pilot project involving over 2000 students secured the services of five liaison workers "to try to involve parents and enlist elders to teach about native culture as well as helping students who have problems" (Journal, 11/04/86).

Government Intervention

By the end of 1984, the delivery of curriculum to Native students in Alberta was represented in the newspaper in anticipation of a provincial Native Education policy (Journal, 12/10/84). The long awaited policy did not appear until the fall of 1988. It is generally accepted that a policy and a curriculum are substantively different. In the Journal, however, the term 'Native Education policy' was used interchangeably with 'Native curriculum' creating some confusion as to meaning.

In the spring of 1988, a Native leader commenting on the six million dollar study for the Assembly of First Nations pointed out that "Indian control of Indian Education had never been defined by the Indian Affairs Department" (Journal, 05/30/88). A common understanding of the nature of control eluded those who were embroiled in the quest to provide appropriate schooling for Native students. The First Nations Assembly believed that not only was schooling of children a treaty right but that the right to control curriculum should be protected constitutionally. In light of various studies indicating a high rate of functional illiteracy in mother tongues (Barman & Battiste, 1995, xii), the Assembly wanted Aboriginal languages to be given official status, constitutional recognition and legislative protection (Journal, 05/31/88).

Content and Quality

Analysis of the data revealed that there were needs and options related to content and quality of curriculum for Native students. Within the dimension of needs, particular attention was given to history, literacy and relevancy.

Needs

History A recurring theme throughout the ten years was the importance of teaching about the history of Canadian First Nations (Journal, 03/10/85; 12/10/87; 06/26/88; 02/03/93): "The curriculum should include the history of Canadian Indians, how they survived the years, their involvement in the development of the land, as the first people of this country" (Journal, 03/10/85). First Nations leaders criticized the content of the traditional curriculum for the deficit of historical/cultural and literary presence of Native Canadians: "Textbooks should be changed to reflect not only white history but a more even handed portrayal of natives" (Journal, 04/20/90).

The demand for a stronger historical presence in curriculum resources also came from outside the native community. The head of the United Church of Canada called for "the study of native history in Canadian schools" given the fact that "there are many areas of Aboriginal history and way of life which are not understood and not available in the educational system" (Journal, 02/03/93). There was also a demand that the portrayal of Aboriginal heroes in curriculum resources "should be given equal treatment with white heroes" (Journal, 04/20/90). Generally, it was felt that inaccurate information and negative stereotypes peppered the limited curriculum resources.

Literacy Descriptions of inadequate education included failure to read and write, failure to graduate and inability to access sufficient academic courses. In any given population one measure of the success or failure of a curriculum can be found in the level of literacy. In 1984, the Journal reported that 50% of the native students who completed high school were functionally illiterate in English: "They can't find work and social assistance becomes a way of life" (Journal,10/06/84). In 1990, the parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in Canada published some disturbing findings with respect to literacy levels among First Nations. Their Report (1990) suggested that 45% of on-reserve Natives were functionally illiterate in their own language (Barman & Battiste, 1995, xii). There was a recognizable focus on the failure of many schools to provide an adequate education: "Statistics for native children going on to high school are very low and their average grade level is very low compared to the population" (Journal, 12/10/87). This recognition applied to both provincially-run and federally-run schools. Overall, there appeared to be a failure to meet the needs of the Native students.

The lack of appropriate resources was not the only concern to be represented in the newspaper. Concerns regarding inappropriate curriculum and a lack of suitable programming for Native students were also common themes: "…many Metis parents withdraw their children after discovering more than half their courses consist of physical education, spares and community work experience" (Journal, 10/06/84). At the end of 1985, opposition to traditional schooling was captured in an emotional plea from the President of the Blue Quills Native Education Centre, who wrote a lengthy article about the failure of traditional schooling to meet the needs of Native students: "The system allows the child to enter grade 9 with a grade 4 level of reading and math but expects the child to take the grade 9 curriculum. It's destroying our children, not educating them" (Journal, 12/19/85). He spoke at length about the challenging circumstances, often chronic in nature, that were part of the daily lives of many Native children. Such circumstances combined with a history of school failure, he argued, called for alternative programs and alternative ways of delivering curriculum. Later articles reinforced similar sentiments and implicated the lack of relevancy as a contributing factor in the high rates of illiteracy: "The education system must be governed by the natives in order that the children learn not only worldly matters such as history, mathematics and computing, etc. but that they will be taught the traditional native values" (Journal, 09/29/87).

Relevancy Accusations of inappropriate curriculum and lack of suitable programming for Native students sometimes represented schooling experiences for Native students as qualitatively different from that of the white students: "Our kids get junk courses because they're native" (Journal, 10/04/84). The junk courses referred to those courses which de-emphasized the academic in favour of the vocational. In the mid-1980's for example, the Journal published a series of reports on the suspension of a group of native students at a high school in northern Alberta (Journal, 10/04/84; 10/06/84; 10/10/84; 02/06/85; 10/02/85; 10/03/85; 03/13/86). On first reading, it appeared that the suspensions occurred because certain students were involved in acts of violence. However, a closer reading revealed a belief contained within the report which suggested the violence may have been influenced by issues specifically related to curriculum: "Is this why our children travel 28 miles to school every morning - to sweep floors and vacuum rugs for some white business man?" (Journal, 10/06/84).

In this particular example, we do not know from the information in the articles whether the inappropriate curriculum was the experience of a majority of Native students or applied only to the special circumstances of a few students. We do know however, that the Journal's representation of the lack of academic courses available to Native students and the surfeit of vocational oriented programming such as work experience and service courses raised questions about curriculum practices. Were these practices relevant to the needs and interests of Native students and did the examples highlighted in the newspaper suggest inequitable practices? The issue of relevancy resurfaced periodically throughout the decade.

Graduation rates are another indicator of curriculum relevancy: "About 90% of native students enrolled in the public school system fail to graduate" (Journal, 10/10/84). These dramatic statistics were given support from the Metis Association of Alberta: "Of the 30 000 Metis students in the province 84% don't make it through junior high school and 98% don't finish high school' (Journal, 06/12/85). Joe Dion, Director of the Blue Quills Native Education Centre in St. Paul Alberta, noted that 85% of all Native students dropped out before completing high school (Journal, 12/19/85).

Options

Throughout the 10 years of newspaper representation, the Journal featured school programs which addressed concerns in Native communities and focused on the Native schooling experience (Journal, 03/04/86; 01/12/87; 04/17/88; 04/24/89; 12/21/91; 02/28/93; 09/24/93). By 1987, when profiles of Native Education programs in urban centers were regularly featured in the Journal, subjects such as Native history, tradition and culture had become components in the curricular programs.

> The Ben Calf Robe Program teaches native young people about their people's history, culture and traditions; provides them with role models since their teachers are native; encourages them to be proud of their spirit (Journal, 12/10/87).

There were Journal articles about elementary, junior high and high schools offering courses in Cree, as well as schools in the public and separate school systems that offered specific programming for students in Native culture. In some cases Native elders were employed to teach specific courses. Other programs, not offered in the public or separate systems, such the Life Skills program offered at Blue Quills High School, focused on drug and alcohol prevention. According to the Director, the objective of the program was to improve attendance, raise self-confidence and encourage self-sufficiency. However, the newspaper's representation of the controversy surrounding delivery of the program, which involved a type of self-defense training, initiated an investigation by a committee of parents and council members (Journal, 12/10/85; 12/16/85; 12/16/85; 12/19/85; 01/08/86).

Articles also included stories of success achieved through the fine arts, as well as the introduction of Native student awards sponsored by the Journal (Journal, 03/22/85; 05/28/85; 04/25/86; 03/12/87; 01/13/87; 04/26/87/ 03/17/88; 12/08/88;12/16/89; 01/27/91; 10/24/91; 05/27/92).

Funding

During the period of this study, funding grievances were aired in two areas. One related to the band-run schools and the other related to programs for Native students attending provincial schools. Because schooling for many Native students was contracted out by the federal government to the provincial government, there was unease regarding the distribution of education funds: "Isolated bands often don't know what's happening with their education dollars and leave it to contracted school boards" (Journal, 12/01/84).

In 1985, approximately 237 schools in Alberta were operated by different Bands (Journal, 12/03/85). By 1988, there were approximately 600 "Indian" schools in Canada, 15 % of which were controlled by Bands and the rest administered by the federal government (Journal, 05/30/88). In Band-controlled schools, leaders frequently complained that the schools were "under-funded and over-controlled" (Journal, 05/30/88). The lack of funding, it was argued, prevented them from repairing or replacing inadequate structures. Some leaders feared that the government would not live up to their financial responsibilities once total control for schooling shifted to the Bands. The newspaper articles suggested that, while Native peoples wanted to control the funds directly (which meant controlling the allocation of those funds in the spirit of financial autonomy), they also wanted the federal government to supply the funds that they would control (Journal, 05/31/88; 06/01/88): "Federal and provincial governments must relinquish their control with the federal government retaining only its role as a funding source" (Journal, 04/31/88).

Between 1986 and 1988, discussion about a Native Education policy/curriculum was renewed in Alberta. The discussions included the establishment of a provincial Native Education fund for improvement to Native Education programs. Local school

Boards such as Edmonton Catholic and Edmonton Public announced their respective budgets for Native programs. Despite the high profile media coverage for Native Education in 1987/88 and despite the announcement of four million in provincial education grants, the increase was perceived as a 20% decrease from the previous year (Journal, 04/15/87): "Instead the money is being tossed around to pay for the salaries of white administrators" and "ultimately the ones who will suffer are the native kids"(ibid).

Federal funding cuts for programs that supported post secondary-education for Native students resulted in strikes, sit-ins and hunger strikes across the country (Journal, 09/13/88; 09/24/88; 03/09/89; 03/19/89; 03/20/89; 04/16/89): "They say their treaties give them a right to post-secondary education, a stance the government has rejected" (Journal, 04/16/89).

Summary

Between 1984 and 1994, the representation of curriculum in Native Education was concerned with quality and control. Although I conceptualized the presentation of the articles around the delivery and the content of curriculum, addressing specific topics related to each aspect of curriculum, all of the topics can be understood in terms of their connection to quality and their relationship to control. Teacher attitudes, competence and cultural awareness reflected needs affecting quality in the delivery of education while literacy, historical/cultural content and personal relevancy reflected needs affecting the quality of content. Social factors such as attendance, substance abuse and violence also had an impact on the way in which curriculum was delivered and understood, consequently affecting the quality of programming.

Issues of control coloured the representation of Native Education in the newspaper. In one sense, control was organized around issues of funding conflicts between the federal government and the Bands. In another sense, it had to do with the power to make curriculum decisions about what should be taught, where, how and by whom.

CHAPTER V: MAKING SENSE OF A PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter II, I established the multi-dimensional nature of curriculum and alluded to various influences which impact the way we conceptualize curriculum. Despite the fact that our understanding of the nature and function of curriculum is always being reshaped in light of new knowledge, characterizing curriculum according to particular orientations illuminates ideological underpinnings, thus reminding us that curriculum perspectives are never value-neutral. These ideological ties implicate curriculum as political text and invites questions about representation in the public domain. Newspaper text about curriculum provides an opportunity to probe the layers of public discourse on curriculum.

In this chapter, I explore the way in which the Journal used a media text to re-present a text about curriculum in the public domain. The discussion is loosely organized around three central concepts: the shaping of a text, curriculum as political text and a public discourse on curriculum. Each section assumes a different level of analysis in the process of interpreting how various aspects of curriculum are addressed in the newspaper. Ultimately, each subsequent level of analysis raises questions that speak to whose interests are being served by this representation of curriculum.

In the first level of analysis I explore factors which appear to contribute to the shaping of a text about curriculum. The discussion is supported by examples from the data to illustrate how this was achieved. The second level of analysis addresses the notion of curriculum as political text. In this study, I interpret political to refer to social actions that can be shown to be linked to social power. How curriculum is represented in the newspaper may be described as political because it not only reflects decisions made by an institution that holds social power, but it also reflects choices that may be influenced by individuals and groups, outside this particular media community, who hold social power. The distribution of funds, which impacts all aspects of curriculum, illustrates a social action that is tied to social power.

The discussion culminates in an analysis of the public discourse on curriculum and is examined through the discourse of conflict, representation of voice, interest and power, and the relationship between ideology and public discourse. Although the discussion is organized into three clusters, in practice these concepts cannot realistically be separated. I have isolated them here in order to facilitate a closer reading of the parts as an approach to understanding the whole.

SHAPING A TEXT

Siegel (1996) characterizes the media as an institutional force with political power. He suggests that the media (which include newspapers) own five sources of political power. One of those sources lies in the role of providers of information (p. 21). I believe that it is not only the selection of information that is provided but the manner in which it is presented that forms one dimension of that power. There are a number of practices inherent in news media production that facilitate the shaping of a discourse, producing texts of different kinds.

Even though some of these practices may include those that genuinely reflect practical limitations encountered in the process of producing a newspaper, others (such as who is selected for interviews and the orientation of the constructed text) may be indicative of types of influences other than institutional constraints. Regardless of intent or constraint, it is through a combination of many factors that the shaping of a text and its contribution to a discourse occurs. The following section addresses some of those factors with respect to the Journal text re-presenting curriculum.

Length and Frequency of Articles

The amount of space allocated to writers whose sole responsibility was schooling issues, (such as guest columnists) was generally more substantial than the space allocated to other writers focusing on curriculum. In the previous chapter, I commented that the Journal's education writer, Olive Elliot, wrote 25% of the articles on Special Needs Education during the first five years in this study surpassing any individual journalist during the 10 years. Elliot maintained a strong voice in the Special Needs strand, and the notion of voice in text will be addressed in another section in this chapter. Here I would like to draw attention to the advantage afforded by access to physical space for text and frequency of reporting. As the education writer, Elliot's column appeared several times a week. Over the course of one year, Elliott (1987/88) used this space to develop an argument, reflecting what appeared to be her personal views, in support of the non-educable clause of Bill 59. In this example we can see the link between length of articles and the potential to develop ideas in greater depth. As the education writer, Elliott could also exercise some choice in the arguments she elected to pursue and how often she chose to pursue them. Having the space to pursue these arguments was a distinct advantage.

Producing news text several times a week provided frequent opportunities to repeat information or misinformation. It also offered the opportunity to promote certain viewpoints. In 1985, for example, the phrase "blueprint for fragmentation and deterioration of the public school system" was repeated several times (Journal, 10/17/85; 10/18/85). This was a reference to the changes in Private Education in the proposed principles for a new School Act and supported a negative stance towards the private system. Similar sentiments expressed as "weakening" or "eroding" the public system appeared in several articles that year (Journal, 06/08/85; 06/11/85; 06/13/85). In the private school strand, the phrase "insensitivity towards blacks, Jews and natives in social studies course material" (Journal, 09/16/84; 03/12/85; 03/13/85; 03/14/85) was repeated successively. This reference to curricular materials illustrated a message achieved through a process of repetition. The message, I think, was not in the obvious denigration of intolerant materials but in the representation of private schools as potentially dangerous places. The curriculum of Private Education did not necessarily conform with mainstream thinking.

Analysis of the data also indicated that some topics, like the integration of Special Needs students were often represented in schooling news while others such as schooling for ESL students or hearing impaired students received considerably less attention.

Topics such as the curriculum in private schools, violence in schools attended by Native students and the challenges in the classroom caused by students with behavior disorders enjoyed consistent attention over a period of months. In the case of Native students, this media attention was sustained over a period of years.

Length and frequency relate directly to the strength of a message, to the power it has to inculcate new beliefs. It is a long held media adage that if a message is repeated often enough, over time it becomes a part of what we believe to be true about a given situation.

Controversy

One of the factors that appeared to influence the life of a particular topic in the newspaper was controversy. It is evident from the breadth of coverage that many topics garnered the spotlight for a brief period of time. Some examples from the article collection include the Youth News network, the smoking ban in schools, textbook fees and year-round schooling. Others, such as Special Needs Education and funding, maintained a strong presence throughout the 10 years. In general, those topics that appeared to generate the most controversy received the most column space over a period of time. In the early stages of the data analysis, it became evident that many issues were represented as prolonged debates. The integration of Special Needs students in the late 1980's and early 1990's, increased funding for private schools throughout the 10 years and the introduction of charter schools as a panacea for what was perceived to be wrong with public education, are three examples which illustrate how controversy can sustain a topic over a period of time.

A topic, such as the non-educable clause in Bill 59, remains alive if it is set up as an argument or a debate. Journalists have some freedom to exercise their judgment regarding the selection of specific quotes. Through a process of carefully chosen quotes, journalists may represent an issue in a manner that is provocative or adversarial. Programming for Native students in northern Alberta, referred to in the previous chapter, represents one example.

The publication of Letters to the Editor is another way of ensuring that an issue continues to breathe in the newspaper. In the Journal, sometimes a controversy turned into a conflict when letters or articles displayed inflammatory text. This was evident in the Special Needs strand when individuals speaking on behalf of the Association for the Learning Disabled challenged practices in the public system. Although we know that controversy sells newspapers, this not does preclude raising questions about the selection of controversial issues. Regardless of the origins of a particular controversy, it is often the text that attracts the most readers. Analysis of the data revealed that education writers from the Journal frequently demonstrated their familiarity with the power of controversy to invite public response, thus extending the life of a particular issue.

Selection

One strand received much greater attention over the 10 years than the others. Analysis revealed that issues centered around Special Needs Education received more attention than Private Education or Native Education. This was consistent throughout the columns devoted to the schooling topics, Editorials and Letters to the Editor. This observation is supported by Siegel (1996), who comments that "media do not transmit all the news they collect or all that is made available by the press services. Rather they are selective, performing a gate-keeping function which helps to shape the information flow to the public" (p. 22). The decision to devote less space to the issues of Private Education and Native Education, suggest that these strands can be perceived as less important, of less interest to the majority of readers and consequently of less value politically.

Although comparatively more attention was focused on Special Needs Education only certain issues were selected to be represented within that strand. For example, the Journal focused attention on issues related to the denial of educational privileges for those children whose Special Needs were so great that they presented enormous challenges both to themselves and to others. The Journal also consistently represented concerns related to the needs of students with learning disabilities. Although curriculum issues addressing academically gifted students and ESL students were mentioned periodically throughout the 10 years, relatively little space was devoted to their concerns.

Selection is also evident in the choice of issues that are represented within the Private Education strand. These revelations in newspaper text about curricular practices in the private schools as racist were represented in such a way as to invite public response. In this role, the newspaper provided a public forum which encouraged debate regarding the legitimacy of such practices.

Stance of the Authors

Shaping can also be achieved through the style in which topics are written. Sometimes stance is revealed through the people who are selected to be interviewed or whose voices are represented in an article including the journalists themselves. Commenting on the power to shape attitudes but revealing his own orientation one journalist suggested that "Attitudes cannot be legislated, but schools are in a powerful position to help shape them in ways essential to a democratic society, particularly one in which forces of bigotry are becoming louder and bolder" (Journal, 12/03/84).

Shaping was also revealed through repetition of units of text such as phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs. It was not unusual, for instance, for pockets of text to reappear in subsequent articles by the same journalist. In Chapter IV, I commented on the controversy created over public funding of private institutions. A phrase that appeared in several articles supporting the position opposing this funding was the "fostering of economic, religious and racial elitism" (Journal, 06/08/85, 06/11/85; 06/12/85: 06/13/85). Although repetition of phrases between articles and among journalists sometimes makes it difficult to determine individual stance, it does raise questions about ideological representations. Why, for example, are certain phrases repeated while others are ignored?

Another practice among journalists was the tendency to rely on the same people for quotes. This practice was evident in the data in all three strands. Is this practice indicative of author stance? Does it represent easy access and minimal effort? Although it may be a combination of both factors, we should be cognizant of the influences of particular orientations and the interests that they may be serving. In the private school strand in 1993 and 1994, when the government was considering the implementation of charter schools, journalists were in the habit of quoting Dr. Friedman, a staunch supporter of charter schools (see Chapter IV). Although Dr. Friedman's expertise was in the field of radiology and not education, his quotes appeared in many of the articles about charter schools.

Within the Special Needs strand, amidst the controversy over the integration of special needs students into mainstream classrooms, Bruce Uditsky, (a parent advocate for disabled students), was often interviewed by the Journal. His views were represented so frequently that readers might genuinely question the credibility of interviewing the same person so often.

Gender

Analysis of all three strands indicated that discussion about curriculum occurred through the voices of men more frequently than it did through women (see Appendices A, B & C). Evidence of this disparity was found primarily in two areas; those whose voices were represented in articles through a process of interviewing and referral and those who authored the articles. With respect to the former, it appeared that journalists selected males over females at a ratio of almost 2:1. This disparity was most noticeable in the data on Native Education and Private Education. In all three strands, there were more male journalists than female journalists; however, the number of articles published by each gender was almost balanced. An imbalance occurred in the Special Needs article set, where the female journalists produced the majority of articles the ratio was almost 2:1.

Summary

Patterns of disparate representation in the newspaper suggest that certain practices confine and thus shape a text representing curriculum in ways that appear to favour certain groups. How these groups are favoured is revealed in curriculum indicators such as content quality and delivery that illuminate the political character of curriculum.

CURRICULUM AS POLITICAL TEXT

Introduction

The newspaper text about curriculum is situated in a discourse about schooling. In the discussion that follows, I have attempted to shade in those spaces from the data that spotlight the political character of curriculum. As I mentioned in Chapter II representations of curriculum in the newspaper appear as discussions that focus on issues related to the content, quality, delivery or assessment of schooling. I believe that it is meaningful to remember that these notions of curriculum must be considered in light of public funding, not only because funding discussions are a common focus for schooling issues in the newspaper but because funding considerations cannot be separated from beliefs about what should be learned in school, how and by whom. The discourse of public funding of schooling intersects with a discourse of curriculum. At that intersection, much of the political nature of text becomes significant.

Funding

Although funding for schooling experienced some minor increases during the 10 years, overall there was a decline in government spending for education. Spending cuts in education had been quietly occurring since 1985 and "by early 1987 the Getty government had frozen education funding and capital funding on schools had been cut in half" (Taft, 1997, p. 21). During the same time period subsidies to private industries were substantially increased and "by fiscal 91/92, Alberta had dropped from the highest spending of the ten provinces in the early and mid eighties to below the Canadian average" (ibid p. 22). The reduction in education funding reached its pinnacle in the years following the election of Ralph Klein's conservative government. At the end of the decade in this study, funding cuts not only mirrored changing financial realities, but suggested an ideological shift in government priorities.

Analysis of the data revealed that certain programs were consistently targeted during each subsequent period of cutbacks. While some programs experienced greater cuts than others, the newspaper text dedicated to the reporting of these cuts varied. Funding for Native Education programs decreased as did funding for English as a second language and yet comparatively little was said in this regard in the Journal. Interestingly, funding for private schooling revealed increases throughout the 10 year period, a point which was acknowledged by the reporting in the Journal. The whole issue of public funding for Private Education invoked strong reactions from various individuals and groups in the community.

Data analysis revealed that the newspaper text painted specific images of certain groups in particular ways and that these images also changed over time. This was illustrated in the way private schools were characterized through funding issues in the first six years of the study.

Content

Examples of extreme deviations in curriculum objectives and materials were used to support an argument that some private schools were failing in their mandate to provide a basic education. Although the American-based outdated curriculum appeared in only a few schools, the headlines intimated that these curriculum practices were pervasive in Alberta private schools.

Palmer and Palmer (1990) suggested that the vitality of conservative, unorthodox religions in the 70's and 80's among middle-class populations in Alberta, albeit a small percentage, could be attributed to a concern for more traditional values in the face of a society that was experiencing high rates of teen pregnancies, drug and alcohol addictions, and suicide. Religion, along with values education was considered an essential component of the curriculum in many private schools. It is perhaps the nature of those values that determined the antagonistic stance presented in the newspaper. The Journal's representations of the values found in the private school curriculum suggested a threat to mainstream values. At the beginning of the decade in this study, the Journal presented information in such a way as to question what was being taught in the private schools (Journal, 09/16/84; 01/26/85). The curriculum content in certain private schools was represented as ideologically distant from that of mainstream education, as something unwanted and undesirable.

Private schools, including those under the auspices of home-schooling and charter schooling, were represented as choosing to be excluded from mainstream schooling by virtue of curriculum content. The desire for separation was represented in the Journal as a singular goal. Toward the end of the decade, features which marked the private schools as distinct from the public school system were represented as favourable. In this new context, when the government was enthusiastically promoting charter schools as an alternative to the allegedly failing public system, private schools were represented in a positive light.

In the Native Education strand, the content of the curriculum came under attack via the Native community in two respects. The text of the newspaper revealed that First Nations students participated in a curriculum that was alleged to be substantively different from those of non-Native students. In the first instance, Native concerns were portrayed through angry parents who were concerned about the content of the curriculum to which their children were exposed. They were represented as wanting their children to participate in the same curriculum as non-Native students, to be included in mainstream curriculum, and to access the benefits which that curriculum offered within the context of the larger society. In another representation, Native concerns were portrayed through angry parents who demanded a culturally appropriate curriculum for their children, one that celebrated Native cultures, languages and values and was also part of the mainstream curriculum. Later that view changed to a desire for a separate curriculum, one that was culturally appropriate and not mainstream.

Quality

Shortly after the Committee On Tolerance and Understanding released their report on private schooling in Alberta (1984a), the Journal published a number of articles regarding the quality of education in these schools. Articles about the shortcomings of the private school curriculum, and the pedagogical practices within the schools appeared in the Journal. In general, these schools were characterized as teaching values that ran counter to commonly accepted beliefs and practices. The curriculum was characterized as anti-Semitic, anti-black, anti-native, promoting intolerance rather than tolerance. While that characterization was valid for a very small percentage of private schools in Alberta, all private schools were in danger of being painted with the same brush. Initially, conflict was presented through Pastor Larry Jones and the Alberta government. Later, that conflict came to incorporate both the public and the private system as the values of each were questioned through periodic attacks conducted via the media.

Quality of education appeared as an issue in the Journal within the framework of conflict. When quality appeared as an issue, it was positioned within a mainstream framework. One was represented as desirable and the other as lacking and it occurred in both Private Education and Native Education. In both strands, this juxtapositioning appeared at each end of the 10 years. Interestingly, the representation of quality altered over the 10 years so that which was undesirable became desirable, albeit not in its original state. The curriculum in the private schools became desirable when public schools were represented as being in crisis.

By 1993/94, Private Education via charter schools or home-schools was being represented as an alternative choice for those people who were concerned about the quality of education in the public system. Did the newspaper inadvertently promote the government's position, which suggested that the competition for students between the public and private system might improve the quality in the public system?

Delivery

In a discourse of inclusion, judgments were being made about who was of value in our society, who was worth listening to, attending to and who merited the honour of being included in the discourse about inclusion. Section 2.9 of the proposed School Act (Bill 59) in 1987 raised the question of who was legally entitled to an education in Canada. It begged the question "Should Alberta Education or individual school Boards be responsible for educating children who might not benefit from schooling because of a severe lack of intellectual functioning or severe medical fragility? These questions really presupposed a philosophy about the human condition and beliefs about the purposes of schooling. In asking if we should school those who (in our definition) may not benefit from schooling, we are taking a position regarding who is of value in our society. A commonly held view of schooling supports the belief that productive members of society should be an end goal. It is difficult to argue with that position; after all, what society doesn't want a productive citizenry? It is how we define productive that becomes problematic.

Summary

Newspapers publish articles that represent the views of different groups or individuals. Discursive practices such as the frequent repetition of ideas, information and phrases may serve to support those views in ways that maintain disparate patterns of representation. Discursive practices such as those framed by the language of content, quality, and delivery were used by the newspaper to sustain particular representations of curriculum. The characterization of private schools as racially intolerant, the characterization of students with certain disabilities as undesirable and the characterization of native students as violent illustrates how particular representations can be understood through the political lens. As Lemke (1995) posits "No one sees *the* world as *it is*. We see the worlds our communities teach us how to see…" (p. 4).

PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON CURRICULUM

Underlying this discussion is an assumption about how we come to understand certain aspects of curriculum as mediated by the text of the newspaper. As Hodder (1998) points out, "Once [words] transformed into a written text, the gap between author and reader widens and the possibility of multiple re-interpretations occurs. The text can say many different things in different contexts" (p. 112). One way text can be understood is in terms of its relationship to other texts. The connection of newspaper text to other texts not only forms part of a discourse about curriculum but embeds it in a broader discourse about schooling. Schooling and curriculum discourses are linked to discourses in which certain cultural and political practices may be linked to political ideologies.

My approach to this part of the discussion considers the interpretation of representation through a discourse of conflict, the presence of voice and the possibility of interests and their relationship to power. Although the newspaper text represents a discourse on curriculum, it may also be interpreted as reflecting a discourse about what and who is valued in Alberta society. It is a text that raises queries about inclusion and exclusionary practices.

Discourse of Conflict

In dealing with contentious issues, the Journal reflected a controversial tone; thus conflict characterized some of the issues which were sustained in the newspaper during the 10 years (1984-1994). In each of the three strands for example, issues related to integration of Special Needs students or Native students were initially presented within the frame of controversy. They began as discussions or arguments and, in the manner of such activities, they emerged in the form of a debate with one side offering a rationale for their position followed by the other side doing the same. At some point, however, the tone and tenor of reporting certain topics shifted from controversy to conflict.

It is possible that conflict grew out of those issues which held the greatest potential for emotional impact, issues that challenged deeply-held beliefs by individuals or groups. Conflicts may be characterized by hostility towards ideas which ultimately threaten personal or group ideology. When this happened individuals and organizations, each representing various levels of power, were positioned against each other. Conflicts were structured between teachers and parents, between teachers and advocacy groups, between governments and organizations. Sometimes individuals were pitted against one another.

Within the Special Needs strand, the notion of integration appeared as a volatile issue. Between certain groups, such as the Gateway Association and the Alberta

Teachers' Association, the interactions were characterized as hostile. The Gateway Association and the Learning Disabilities (both advocacy groups) differed in their views regarding the nature of integration. Although both groups spoke on behalf of children with Special Needs they were represented as being in conflict regarding the delivery of education.

Conflicts could be played out through Letters to the Editor. The intertextual nature of the dialogue was evident as letter writers referred to previously published letters or articles from other individuals or organizations. The conflict was structured in such a way as to create a back-and-forth movement between the two parties, reminiscent of the way in which arguments move in face-to-face conversation. It was interesting to note how the newspaper organized this dialogue so that one party in the conflict was represented more often than the other party.

In another example involving conflict from the Special Needs strand, the newspaper organized the debate about the non-educable clause between the parent groups and the government and the parent/advocacy groups and the Journal's education writer. The majority of the letters published during this time supported the removal of the clause. In essence, the representation by the Journal of the debate suggested polarized views of the opposing parties: As Werner and Nixon (1990) suggested: "Competing groups tend to define the dispute in ways that enhance their positions of power and protect their privileges" (p. 7).

Voice

In the public dispute about the use of public funds for Private Education, analysis of the data revealed certain patterns of representation. The voices representing the majority, that is those who were against using public money for private schooling, were represented according to groups. There was the voice of the Coalition of School Boards (Save the Public Education, a group formed specifically to oppose the funding), the Association of Superintendents and the Editorial Board of the newspaper. The voices supporting the funding were represented as individual voices such as those found in Letters to the Editor, the education writer Olive Elliott and the Minister of Education.

This representation of voices of groups against individuals can be understood in terms of strength and consequently power.

Discourses not only reflect the ways that we speak about matters such as those found in the examples of written and spoken language, they also reflect the ways in which we act. Our discourse represents a set of complex social actions and ways of being that incorporates a particular view of the world. Lemke (1995) has observed that although researchers who study discourse may exercise competency in the examination of linguistic and psychological features, "the social context of discourse and issues of discourse as social action are largely ignored" (p. 21). He queries the lack of attention paid to the voices embedded in the discourse, the social context of the voices and the consequence of the resulting discourse. In the previous chapter, distinct patterns of particular social actions were clearly evident. The distribution of voices, for example, suggests that equal access and equal representation may not be a feature within particular social institutions. The recognition of specific practices within the larger democratic community has certain implications for other social actions.

Whose voices are featured in the media and whose interests are represented becomes central to understanding the nature of a public discourse. This is true for all aspects of social life, not just curriculum. Analysis of curriculum discourse in the Journal revealed some patterns that raise questions about relations of power within the general discourse on schooling. These patterns extend beyond the confines of schooling and are attached to other discourses that bring into view various political and philosophical orientations.

The findings of this study reveal an absence of text that is informed by the curricular concerns of teachers, the large majority of whom are women. There is an absence of text that addresses the curricular needs of certain groups of students who fall within the boundaries of Special Needs Education. In particular, there is an absence of text that addresses the needs of ESL students and those who are physically handicapped. The former is comprised of individuals from non-English speaking countries, students whose parents may not be citizens, who may not be white, who may not have access to a variety of social institutions, one of which may be the newspaper.

One interpretation sees curriculum as being presented through a frame of discrimination. Practices of discrimination are tied to cultural behaviour and are embedded in our social institutions. These practices, like other social practices, although constituting a part of our everyday life, are often tied to ways of orienting ourselves to the world and are integral to our world view. These practices are normative. They are based on values and they affect the everyday decisions that we make in our ordinary lives. In this respect it is possible to connect practices of discrimination with ideological positions.

When the collection of articles was approached from the standpoint of a complete text, the shape of curriculum discrimination was altered. We see that the newspaper text itself is a discriminatory text. This can be understood in the non text, in the absence of rather than the presence of text. An example can be found in the articles on Native Education. Despite the implications of a larger social movement among First Nations people during the period of the study, the schooling of Native students received considerably less attention than schooling concerns of Special Needs students. This inattention raises questions about whose interests and whose children are valued. Was the absence of text an oversight or was it a function of prioritizing issues? Was the exclusion intentional or accidental? Did the absence of text on Native Education reflect a cultural bias resulting in a quiet discrimination?

Within any school community there is always a small number of parents who volunteer at the school in various capacities. It may also be these same parents who speak to the principal or teachers on a regular basis regarding their individual concerns and who also attend all the Parent Council/Association meetings. These voices sometimes represent the concerns of a few as the concerns of a majority. In the absence of other voices, these voices can sometimes play a dominant role in shaping a narrative about a particular school community.

In the newspaper articles, certain patterns reflecting the representation of voices became evident. In general, the voices of women, children, teachers and those representing other cultural groups were less conspicuous than white, male adults who held administrative positions in education or government. The anomaly was found in articles about Native Education. Although the voices of adult males were represented in a 2:1 ratio, it was the lack of representation from government and the comparatively larger representation of student and teacher voices that provided the surprise.

Gender was not the only issue of disparity in representation. Geographical silence also figured into the construction of curriculum issues. The absence of articles that addressed concerns throughout the province with respect to these particular strands was noticeably present. Although the Journal is a provincial newspaper the coverage, in the majority of cases, was restricted to the area north of Red Deer. The voices of southern and eastern Alberta were rarely represented in any of the strands. This omission fails to call upon a substantive region of the larger community. While provincial regulations affect all educators and students in the province, including those who have traditionally fallen under federal jurisdiction, the diversity in regional circumstances may be such that it alters the image of the whole educational landscape.

Despite the fact that there was political representation from Native Associations and Band council leadership, the political representation in the data did not reflect that of the larger community, unlike the Special Needs strand, which clearly demonstrated Alberta government representation. It is perhaps in the non-representation of the dominant governing bodies, in the voices that are absent, that we can look to for meaning. How this pattern is interpreted may depend on the questions that are asked. Does this, for example, speak to journalistic bias, lack of government interest or inaccessibility? Perhaps those questions are moot and the real concern should be the lack of government commentary. The absence of political presence in the newspaper articles may reflect a disinterest in Native issues, a lack of interest in issues that do not have a direct impact on mainstream education.

Comparatively speaking, articles addressing the concerns of Native Education were sparse compared to the other strands. Can this be interpreted as evidence of what the newspaper valued as worthy of mention in the articles on schooling? Did journalists choose to exclude the Native voice in the discourse about schooling? While not conclusive in a quantitative sense is it possible to interpret this omission in terms of institutional beliefs about the significance of First Nations students? Whose story should be included and whose should be excluded? Does institutional exclusion represent oversight or leanings toward a particular ideology which marginalizes certain members of our society based on their cultural and linguistic affiliations?

Although articles were published highlighting successful programs within Native communities or within the public system, the voice of Native students and teachers were often heard within the context of violence. What emerges is a representation of First Nations students and consequently their families as outsiders. Voices representing other cultures were underrepresented in all three strands.

Although curriculum discourse is very much a function of political discourse it does not necessarily include those who experience curriculum in the world of practice. In the hierarchy of schooling, teachers and students are the social actors with the least currency and the voices of teachers and students are noticeably absent from public discourse about curriculum.

Interests and Power

Children suffering from behaviour disorders were represented as problems; problems for teachers, problems for society, problems for other children. They were represented as taking away from rather than adding to the richness of the classroom, as stealing time, energy and resources away from other children. It is not uncommon for children with behaviour disorders to come from families who are struggling economically, who may already have a number of other problems within their own family, who may also be connected to a range of social agencies. There is a greater proportion of foster children in the behaviour-disordered population; children who have been removed from their homes because of violence, substance abuse or a variety of other physical and psychological abuses. They represent a segment of the population who is already marginalized socially, economically, and politically. There was no organization to collectively represent their voices, only other voices to protect their rights along with others in a general sense.

Learning disabled children were represented as children whose needs were not being met, who were denied appropriate programs due to lack of funding who were in need of defense and protection. A learning disability is not indicative of intelligence . It is rather the very existence of a higher intelligence that allows children with learning disabilities to develop their own strategies to compensate for deficiencies in particular areas of learning. The Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta is a well organized advocacy group with substantive parent and professional representation. This representation reflects an educated group of people who know how to use the media in their campaign to secure the very best for the children that they represent.

I will use examples from the first strand to illustrate this point. The descriptor Special Needs Education was used in this thesis, as it was in the newspaper, to refer to the education of children who were labeled as deaf, hearing impaired, dependent handicapped, autistic, gifted, multiply handicapped, learning disabled, mentally handicapped, behaviour disordered and ESL. It is worth noting that the interests of all of the aforementioned were not represented in a specific sense, although they were included in a general sense such as in the discussions of policy. Rarely, for example were the interests of children who needed ESL programs mentioned. Occasionally there were articles profiling individual children who were diagnosed as autistic, deaf, or hearing impaired.

Issues of control figure prominently in the First Nations narrative. Control over schooling was associated very much with voice, having a say in the education of their children, having a say in the choice of curriculum and the content of that curriculum and having a say in who taught their children.

Ideology and Public Discourse

Political text assumes an underlying notion of ideology. In the early stages of their writing, both Apple and Giroux argued that the content and form of curriculum were ideological (Pinar et al., 1995). How that content and form is represented in the public domain may also be understood within an ideological framework.

The discourse of discrimination is one example which flows through all three strands on a number of levels. The Journal published a number of articles that illuminated discriminatory practices in Native Education, Special Needs Education and Private Education. However, in assuming a normative stance in the manner revealed through the text about curricular practices in private schools, the newspaper text about discriminatory text is itself a text that is ideological.

The characterization of the private schools as racially and religiously intolerant and participating in a fundamentalist ideology was achieved through the juxtaposition with the image of public schools as components of a democratic system whose institutions celebrated tolerance of ideas and embraced all students regardless of colour, religion or mental and physical disabilities.

In 1994, the Journal published a series of articles about the origin and nature of charter schools (Journal, 01//20/94; 02/07/94; 02/11/94; 02/25/94; 02/26/94; 03/06/94; 03/20/94; 03/27/94). While text representing both sides of the charter school debate emerged over several months, generally the representation of charter schools in the last half of the 1993/94 school year appeared hopeful. These articles followed on the heels of the Alberta government's announcement to open charter schools in the fall of 1994. Charter schools were represented as "an innovation of a conservative education movement deeply dissatisfied with the public schools" and that objections to the establishment of these schools was in part "an ideological quarrel" (Journal, 02/09/94). An elaboration of those conflicting ideologies was not forthcoming. What the collection of articles failed to disclose, however, was that the prime mover for charter schools in Alberta was connected to a little known group (Albertans for Quality Education) with strong affiliations to "an American ultra fundamentalist religious

Right" (Barlow & Robertson 1994) who, with a membership of less than 400, claimed to represent the concerns of parents in Alberta . In the Journal, the group was referred to as "a group of parents and business people fighting to improve poor academic results of Alberta students" (Journal, 11/15/93). This group, which fully supported charter schools, presented a brief to Alberta Education recommending a number of controversial changes to schooling in Alberta (Albertans for Quality Education, 1993). It is noteworthy, as Taylor (1999) has observed that, "subsequent reforms introduced by the government corresponded quite closely to AQE recommendations in its 1993 position paper" (p. 101). The absence of commentary in the Journal linking this group with the dramatic changes in the educational landscape raises questions about discretionary selection. As well as raising questions about tacit support by the newspaper for ideological positions, these discursive practices may in fact serve to reinforce ideological positions of certain groups within society.

Summary

I am suggesting that the newspaper text teaches us to look at curriculum in a particular way: the way that it is presented, or alternatively, not presented, to us. McLaren (1989) suggests that ideology is "the intersection of meaning and power in the social world". He, like Apple and Giroux, interprets ideology as common sense beliefs. Our ideology reflects what we believe to be true about the world we live in. Those commonsense beliefs are based on custom, ritual and social practice, including discourse practices. Our ideology is always contextual. It is contingent upon our socio-cultural position and includes many factors such as age, race, gender and religion.

I argue that the way in which curriculum issues are represented in the newspaper, while attached to a discourse on schooling, are also connected to a political discourse that involves a broader community of interests. This argument rests on the assumption that the media, as well as those who have access to the meaning making structures in the social world, have the means to shape a discourse on curriculum through a combination of unintentional and discretionary selection.

Discourse on curriculum in the public domain can be used to maintain or promote cultural practices that serve the interests of certain groups and marginalize the interests of others. The findings in this study suggest that a newspaper can shape a public discourse about curriculum in ways that favour particular groups.

CHAPTER VI: LAYERED REPRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The school year 2001/2002 was a tumultuous year for teachers and students across Alberta. Many school districts across the province were preoccupied with the possibility of a strike. In February of 2002 that possibility became a reality for some districts. In the fall of 2001 and throughout the early months of 2002, articles addressing working conditions and salaries of teachers occupied much of the space devoted to schooling issues in the Journal.

During this time I was teaching an undergraduate course for preservice teachers which included, among other requirements, an observation round in the schools. During both semesters of the 2001/2002 school year, I asked the students to collect articles about schooling in Alberta, from one newspaper, over a period of 6-10 weeks. One of the reasons for this assignment was to familiarize the students with current issues affecting schooling in Alberta. A second purpose was to introduce them to the variety of opinions that constitute public perceptions about teachers, students and curriculum in Alberta. The assignment required them to identify key information in each article and to complete a mini-analysis of their findings. They were asked to comment on patterns in reporting.

Both male and female students commented on the dearth of female voices represented in the articles they selected. Comments made in subsequent discussions suggested that these findings were unexpected. In seminar discussions about gender equity in the classroom, my students did not recognize inequitable treatment based on gender as part of their personal schooling experiences. It was my turn to be surprised. Was their perception of gender equity a byproduct of contemporary discursive practices?

Another common thread among the assignments was a perception that teachers were portrayed in a negative light. Although I did not necessarily concur with their overall assessment, I understood how the students arrived at their evaluation. Several students commented that teachers were represented as being primarily concerned with money in the form of salary increases and less concerned with the effect that a strike would have on their students, particularly those in their graduating year. Teachers, according to the undergraduate students, were represented as putting their own interests above all else. This representation was somewhat confusing for them because it did not resonate with their practicum observations and experiences. Although my students could not articulate an understanding of discursive layers, their comments and findings suggest they were aware that the newspaper text about schooling was more than just a straightforward commentary about schooling. Through the articles they had collected, the students were developing an awareness that issues were being represented and thus shaped by a newspaper text. Modes of representation are revealed when we understand the text through discursive layers.

LAYERING OF DISCOURSE

Meaning making is a discursive practice and, like other such practices in our communities, contributes to discourse(s). I learned that what is printed in the newspaper contributes to many different layers of discourse. As Lemke (1995) suggests, "The most profound implication of a textual politics is that by examining the texts of our own community we can come to understand how and why we make the meanings we do, and what other meanings might be made instead" (p. 79). The meanings I have made through a discourse about curriculum have produced a text about curriculum. I began this study with questions about the representation of curriculum in a provincial newspaper. Guided by the research questions offered in Chapter I, my exploration of the newspaper coverage of curriculum revealed a layering of discourse in the newspaper that moved beyond a discourse confined to curriculum. It is this layered representation of curriculum that provides the focus for this chapter and speaks to the cultural and social significance of this study.

Peeling Back the Layers

The layers of discourse were revealed through the process of description, analysis and critique: discursive practices which contribute to a discourse on curriculum. Each subsequent layer raised questions that revealed another layer of curriculum discourse. In the following sections, I offer a description of each layer of curriculum discourse as it corresponds to the respective research questions and I provide illustrative examples from all three strands. These layers are characterized as literal, interpretive and critical and can be understood through the actions of telling, explaining and critical reflecting.

Literal

The first layer represents an exterior or outer layer of discourse. It is the layer that is most visible and is easily recognized. The text that contributes to this discourse is descriptive, a matter of fact account of what has transpired in response to the questions 'who' 'what' 'where' and 'when' and 'why'? If asked what a text is about, this is the layer to which we respond. We can easily say or tell what this text is about. The literal interpretation takes meaning from words in their primary sense and is essentially a neutral reporting of social actions, a documentation of ideas and events. The first layer of discourse is revealed through a literal interpretation of the text that contributes to it. This outer or protective layer conceals the underlayers and does not always suggest the texture beneath.

The first layer corresponds to my initial research question; 'What aspects of curriculum are addressed'? A discussion of this layer of discourse is found in Chapter IV where I describe the scope of curriculum coverage in the newspaper and describe the individual strands in terms of delivery, content and quality. This layer tells about curriculum in a general sense and curriculum in Native Education, Special Needs Education and Private Education. Examples from this layer of discourse include the development of the new School Act between 1984 and 1988 and the introduction of block funding in 1984. Events include legislation and proposed legislation which had an impact on all three strands. It includes funding cutbacks and increases, program changes in Native Education, Special Needs Education and Private Education as well as curricular changes specific to the various subjects. A public text constituted by factual information contributes to the first layer of discourse; the potential exists to understand this public text about curriculum as discrete units of information disconnected from wider contexts. A subsequent layer is only revealed when we try to make sense of the surface layer of discourse through further questioning.

Reading the newspaper is not simply a gathering of facts, a collection of information about a particular topic. Being informed is not just being able to report on the facts of the matter. In the presence of one type of understanding, that which results from literal interpretation, we are provided with an opportunity to move from the exterior dimension of a discourse about curriculum into the interior layers. The surface layer is peeled back when we query the inferences of a descriptive text and a very different quality in the texture of the interior layers is revealed. When we move into the interpretive level we begin to understand that a newspaper text appears to be about one thing but may be really about something else.

Interpretive

Beneath the exterior layer which provides a description of curriculum lies another layer which seeks to explain. This layer of discourse deals with the how and why of curriculum. Explanations are constructed to assist the reader in interpreting the situation. This layer of discourse overlaps with the first layer in the sense that both layers address the question 'how'. For example, at the beginning of the decade in this study, both Private Education and Native Education were represented in the newspaper text in terms of deficits. The content and quality of the curriculum in Private schools were represented as inferior to those of schools in the public system. Embedded in a discourse of controversy, characteristic of media discourse, Private Education was cast in opposition to the Public education. This opposition is illuminated when understood in the presence of other discourses such as a discourse about the superiority of mainstream schooling or a religious discourse about the dangers of fundamentalist beliefs. Both discourses support a belief that public schools are superior. That superiority is enhanced when Private Education is represented through a discourse of deficit.

By the end of the decade, this representation of curriculum in both Private Education and Public education was reversed. Public education was recast through a discourse of failure signaled by the language of academic crisis. Private Education was recast through a discourse of possibility and academic achievement. Private Education was represented as a desirable alternative to address the perceived shortcomings of the public system. These shortcomings can be understood in the presence of an economic discourse that celebrated private over public and eschewed global competition and economic efficiency.

At the beginning of the decade in the study, curriculum in Native Education was represented in the presence of a discourse of failure; failure to attend, failure to learn, failure to deliver and failure to behave in socially acceptable ways. All of these representations of failure supported a racial discourse that characterized Aboriginal people as lacking intellectually, emotionally and socially. Toward the end of the decade the discourse of failure was replaced with another discourse about Indigenous People, one which celebrated cultural differences and offered hope through a discourse of respect and tolerance. The text that contributed to this discourse was constituted by articles that focused on positive changes and successful individual and group endeavors.

In the Special Needs strand, one of the story-lines woven through this text involved the placement of students with Special Needs. Placement or the delivery of curriculum was represented through notions of integration and segregation which are themselves conflicting ideas and overlay social and cultural discourses that address issues of racial tolerance and intolerance. The text about students with Special Needs was embedded in a discourse setting out a hierarchy of disabilities. Thus, certain disabilities are deemed more acceptable than others and subsequently more deserving of public compassion.

The second layer of discourse about curriculum is illuminated in the presence of social and cultural discourses which reveal particular representations. This leads us to query why certain representations are favoured over others. Thus the interpretive layer opens up the possibility for us to peel back yet another layer which invites critical reflection about the nature of these representations.

Critical

A critical layer invites us to reflect on the representations that we have recognized through the first two layers. Asking whose interest are being served by representing Private Education or Public education in particular ways facilitates understanding the text at a deeper discursive level. If we think of normative terms such as positive and negative, good or bad it becomes easier to justify social actions particularly when they affect communities of people rather than individuals. The emotional link associated with issues can be used to serve political agendas. For example, the issue of the integrating all children with Special Needs into the classroom continues to be a volatile issue. It is a given in contemporary western societies, which hold democratic beliefs and processes as sacrosanct, that all children have a right to an education. In recent years the integration of children with Special Needs into mainstream classrooms has been represented as something that is good; a goodness which can be translated as a socially responsible action. Government departments that legislate integration, or, whose policies reflect integrative practices, stand on the plank of moral justification. However, when integrative actions such as those suggested for children with Special Needs coincide with severe funding cutbacks and across the board downsizing, the push for socially responsible actions can be understood as serving a different agenda. Alternatively, whose interests are being served by representing one group of Special Needs students in a way that justifies their separation from other students? Does this tie into a broader discourse that supports a privileged position for mainstream students? Similarly, whose interests are being served by representing Native Education within a discourse of failure? Is this representation achieved in the presence of a discourse that rationalizes the marginalization of certain cultures while supporting a privileged position for other cultures?

In Chapter V, I commented that in all three strands it was evident certain voices represented by groups or individuals were represented more frequently than others while other voices were rarely represented. My interpretation points to a connection with issues associated with equity. An informal tally indicated that male voices were substantially over represented in the data in all three strands. Does this tie into a cultural discourse which devalues the intellectual contribution of one gender and maintains the power and thus control of the other gender? Teachers' voices were-under represented. The majority of teachers in this province are women. I think that disparate patterns of representation, as indicated in Chapter V, accomplish an ideological function because these representations are limited in the way they are conceptualized and by whom they are conceptualized.

All public texts warrant a critical inquiry. A critical inquiry provides an opportunity to explore what the texts in our community are trying to teach us, inviting us to think about the nature of those teachings and the way in which they challenge or support our collective beliefs.

READING THE NEWSPAPERS AND SOCIAL PRACTICES

This study clearly points to the significance of understanding the nature of our public texts. What do we value as a community and as a society? How are those values woven through the public texts of our communities? In particular, this study underlines the need for teachers, parents, students, government representatives - essentially all those connected to schooling, to think about how they may unwittingly participate in and contribute to discourses that do not necessarily reflect personal or institutional beliefs. How does this happen? In part, it is through the processes of the construction of text but it also happens through the ways in which the text is read. Very often we read as though the factual information, which I discussed in reference to the literal layer, is complete and is accurate and, in our haste to gather information, we fail to question the nature and source of that information. I think it is imperative, as I mentioned in the discussion of the discursive layers, that we approach the reading of the newspaper in a manner that raises questions at all three levels.

Public text about curriculum may shelter discourses about economic priorities, political beliefs, or the role of minority groups in society. These discourses may be used to support other discourses which favour the interests of one group over another in ways that widen the inequitable distribution of social power and thus do not serve the interests of all citizens. We need to be attentive to why a particular representation or lack of representation, of any group or individual dominates the text and colours the discourse. I do not think representations are as simple and as one dimensional as I have indicated in the previous examples with respect to the discursive layers. I believe they are multi-dimensional and that the purposes for this type of representation are, as Michael Apple (1993) has suggested. In the process of bringing a disparate population to a particular viewpoint, it is helpful to appeal to a wide range of interests through a variety of dimensions. Between 1992 and 1995 when the Government of Alberta initiated a process of severe funding cutbacks to social programs, including education, the Journal was rich with articles depicting the controversy that ensued. In order to justify drastic cuts to education the Government had to persuade Albertans that the cutbacks were essential. One of the ways this was done was by appealing to different segments of the population through the newspaper. One strategy, not unique to Alberta, was to cast public education in the colour of crisis. Juxtaposing comparisons of international test results and economic failures, a discourse of school success intersected with a discourse of global competitiveness, inviting the business community to raise the flag of alarm. The shortcomings of the public system, referred to earlier in this thesis, were highlighted in articles that celebrated the success of private education which managed on substantially less funding than the public system.

This study suggests that organizations such as the Teacher Associations, School Boards and Government Departments whose members engage with curriculum in a variety of ways, may want to be more attentive to the ways in which they are represented through the text of the newspaper. In developing a greater awareness of how those representations support a range of agendas, individuals and organizations can take steps to address those representations which undermine or are contrary to organizations' ethos.

EXTENDING THE RESEARCH

There are a number of avenues which may be followed in extending the research in this study. These include working with other areas of curriculum not utilized in this report, shifting focus to the issues of voice in public discourse on curriculum, and addressing the reading of the newspaper text within the contexts of the classroom and organizations.

This study was deliberately contained by focusing on three strands of curriculum issues. This resulted in an intentional exclusion of data which, while linked to the concepts framing the study, would have broadened the scope of the study still further. I made reference to themes that were consistently represented in the articles about curriculum. However provocative, it was impossible to explore each topic which emerged throughout the research process. For example, the representation of issues associated with the establishment of Francophone schools in Alberta offered enough data upon which to base a study. This particular collection of articles suggested a link with the concepts developed through the three strands presented in this study. Although I referred to discriminatory text and discussed notions of integration and segregation as they related to each of the three strands, my study was not conceptualized around these specific ideas. Despite being tempted to move more substantively in that direction, I needed to contain the study so that it was a manageable project. Curriculum perspectives represented in the newspaper related to intercultural education and multicultural education might be examined in light of the analysis presented in this thesis.

The findings revealed patterns of representation that warrant further investigation and should perhaps suggest the direction of future studies. In the analysis I discussed the notion of voice, commenting on male and female voices in a very general sense with respect to their representation in the individual strands. I alluded to the connection between gender and social power where I implied that the representation of voices emerging in curriculum issues was reflective of a broader pattern of representation of voices embedded in our social and cultural institutions. My discussion suggests the importance of future studies which take voice as the central question in the research about curriculum discourse in a public text. Another study might take as its central question the representation of teachers' voices in the newspaper text about schooling.

A practical application of this study for both teachers and students can be found within the boundaries of existing programs. In many countries, including Canada, schools are involved in innovative partnerships with local newspapers. The partnership, known as Newspapers in Education (NIE), is locally developed and encourages the use of newspapers most commonly addressing the needs of junior and senior high school students. One of the goals of NIE is to promote skills in subject areas such as language arts, math and science. Another is to support literacy and critical thinking objectives. The interpretation of what constitutes critical thinking, particularly in light of the findings of this study, suggests another possibility for research. Do these partnerships for example, address the discursive practices of newspapers in ways that genuinely facilitate critical thinking, raising questions about a newspaper as a corporation representing private interests? Future researchers may want to explore the ways in which existing programs do or do not address the layering of discourse in the newspaper text subsequently addressing the number of ways that newspaper texts can be understood. Exploring the implications of the different levels of interpretation will open up the possibilities for understanding the ways that our communities develop meaning. Students will gain greater insight into the ways that ideas are manipulated to serve different agendas.

FINAL NOTES

Several years ago I gave a book talk to an audience of teachers and librarians. The book I chose to present was timely. It addressed current issues in Canadian schooling as well as social, economic and political implications of public representations of schooling. Carried away by my own enthusiasm for the provocative subject matter I attempted to encourage several colleagues to explore what I interpreted as a worthy and relevant read. I was disheartened by their response. A number of reasons were proffered for their disinterest and I was left to reflect upon the implications of political apathy within the context of my profession.

The findings from this study suggest that teachers cannot and should not be complacent about the discourse of schooling. It is not enough to live in the world of the classroom and be concerned only with matters of a particular school or one group of students. The layering of discourse in the newspaper text about curriculum suggests teachers need to be cognizant of how schooling is represented through public text because to a certain degree those representations shape public perceptions about schooling. These representations not only colour our interpretations about what is significant in schooling but they are linked to other social and cultural discourses which consequently influence social, economic and political actions.

The anecdote offered at the beginning of this chapter offers a contemporary example that hints at the layering of discourse in the newspaper text. On the surface the text about schooling in Alberta is represented through a reporting of negotiations, strikes and arbitration, a chronology of facts suggesting only information and neutrality. Another discursive layer is revealed when the text is understood in terms of how various groups such as teachers, parents and Government Departments are represented. Critical literacy demands that we question those representations and that we question those representations publicly as we try to understand them within the context of broader agendas.

It is not enough to suggest that newspapers, as agencies contributing to the cultural and educational context of a society, have a public responsibility to court a wide variety of interests and that they must do so with integrity. We also have a responsibility, as readers and as active participants in a society that values schooling, to critically evaluate public representations of schooling and to address those representations in a way that genuinely considers the interest of the common good.

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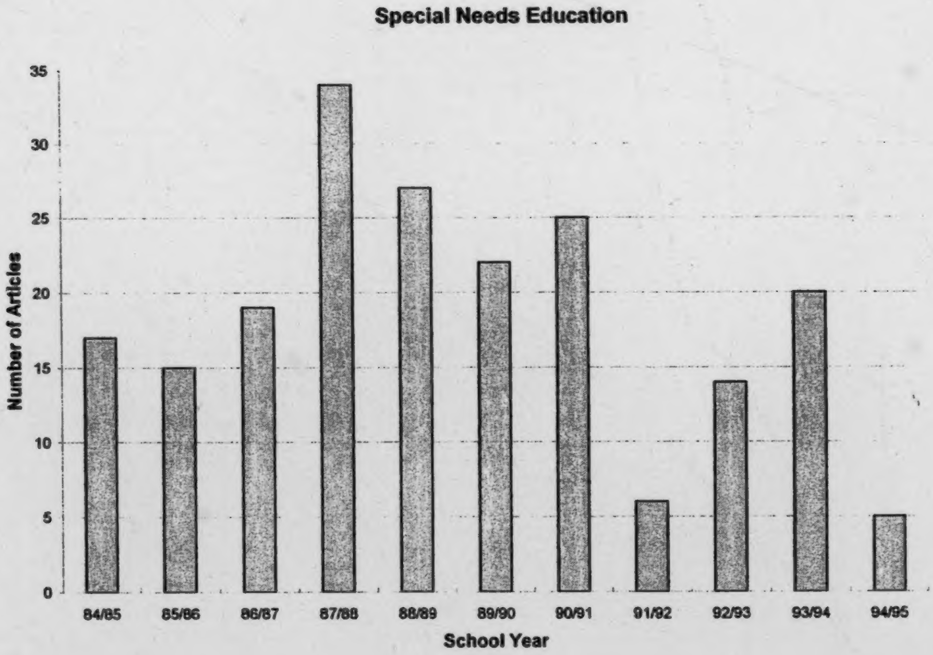
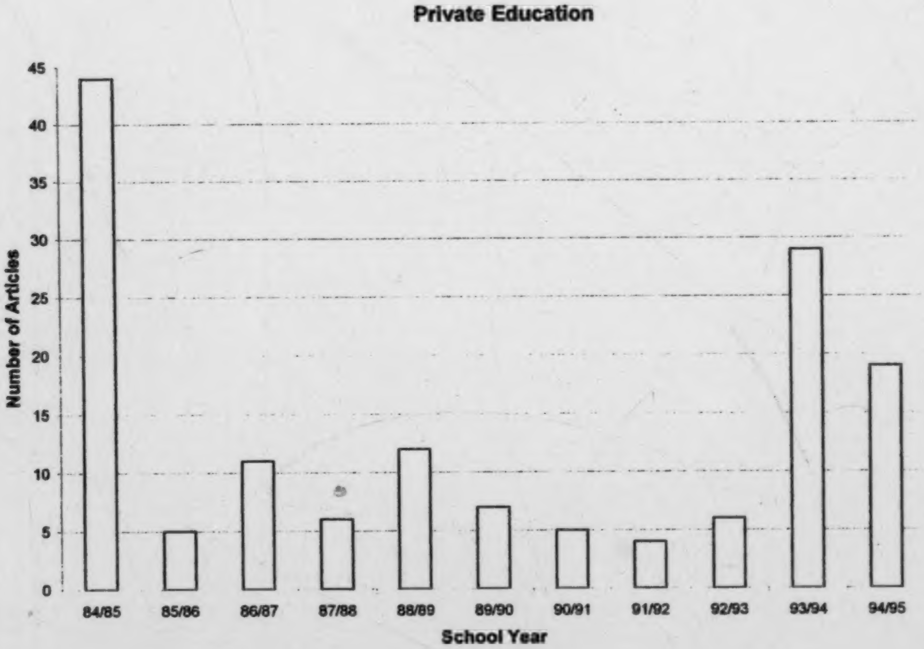
APPENDIX A



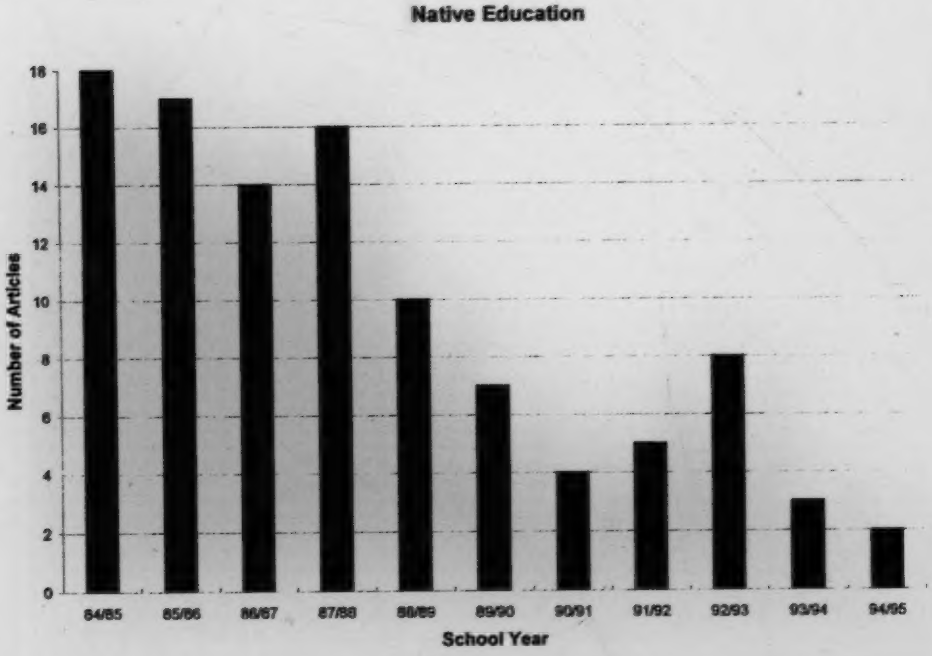
This study on Special Needs examines 170 articles addressing the education of exceptional children. Olive Elliott, the Journal's education writer between the spring of 1985 and the spring of 1990, wrote 30 of those articles, averaging 600-800 words per column. This accounted for 18% of the total number of articles and 25% of the articles written in the first five years. Of the 170 articles, in this collection, 65% of those articles were written in the first five years of the study. In this collection 216 men and 161 women were interviewed for the articles. 21 male journalists wrote 48 of the 130 authored articles while 14 female journalists wrote 82 of the authored articles. Three names were not included in the tally because the names did not clearly indicate the gender of the journalist. In this collection, there were 55 Letters to the Editor, 27 from women and the remainder from men.

APPENDIX B



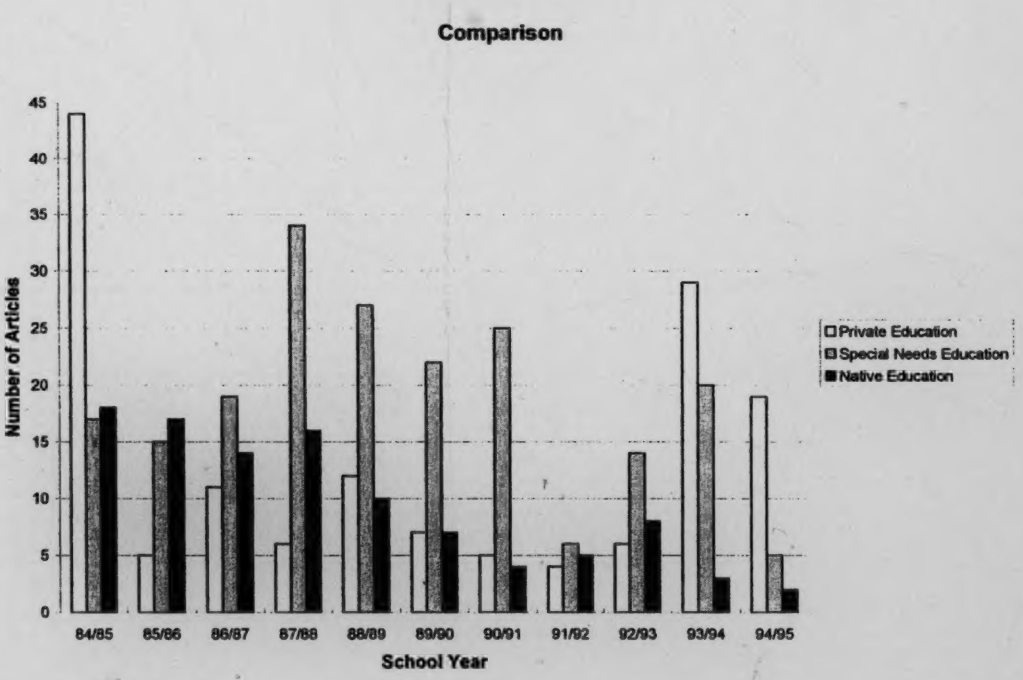
Between September of 1984 and June of 1995 there were 115 articles, in the archival collection, that addressed Private Education in Alberta. A graphic (see above) reveals that coverage was weighted at both ends of the decade. 40 of the one 115 articles appeared in the school year 1984/85, while 35 appeared in 1994/95. In total, 14 women wrote 27 articles. Of those 27, education columnist Olive Elliott was the author of 8. 17 male journalists wrote 29 articles, eight of which were authored by journalist Paul De Groot. The collection also included 17 letters, equally representing male and female readers. 120 male voices were represented in the articles and 43 female voices.

APPENDIX C



The data collection contained 97 articles about Native Education in Canada and the majority of those articles were specific to events and people in Alberta. In addition to news agency reports and Letters to the Editor, the collection contained both authored articles and unauthored articles with the former comprising the bulk of the reporting. During this 10 year period, 33 journalists from the Edmonton Journal wrote about Native Education. Approximately one third of the journalists were women. The women wrote 32 of the 70 authored articles while 21 male journalists wrote 38 articles. Throughout the ten years, 146 men were interviewed compared to 56 women. There was little consistency with regard to the people who were doing the reporting from one year to the next. Compared to the number of articles devoted to Special Needs Education and Private Education, attention to Native Education was considerably less (see Appendix D).

APPENDIX D


Comparison
Number of Articles
School Year
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
84/85
85/86
86/87
87/88
88/89
89/90
90/91
91/92
92/93
93/94
94/95
□ Private Education
▨ Special Needs Education
■ Native Education